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MRS. H. R. HAWEIS

AUTHOR OF

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FOREWORDS.

EVERY English child ought to know something about a writer who left so deep an impression on his age and on the English tongue as Geoffrey Chaucer; and the success of *Chaucer for Children* seems to show that not only elder, but even very young, children are capable of understanding and enjoying his poems when placed before them in a pleasant form.

In preparing a *Chaucer for Schools* I have responded to a demand which, I may say, has, in part at least, been created by *Chaucer for Children.*

The want of a similar work, adapted for school purposes, was early pointed out to me by competent authorities, and I have now been induced to reprint a large portion of the juvenile edition with new matter, but without the various coloured illustrations and woodcuts, which may very profitably be studied in connection with the present work.

Probably much of the construction and pronunciation of old English which seems stiff and obsolete to grown-up persons, appears easier to children, whose mode of talking is often very like it; and the younger they are, the less they boggle over the final *e*, which seems to be the grand stumbling-block to older readers. Indeed the final *e* comes easy naturally to children, who are used to say 'doggie,' 'horsie,' 'handie,' long before dog, horse, and hand; a peculiarity which may actually be a relic of the old Saxon pronunciation, lingering like many interesting old words among the servant class. Children's habit of saying '*this*,' this dog, this fairy, &c., is quite Chaucerian, who habitually speaks of his characters as 'this knight,' or 'this Emelye,' 'this yeoman,' as the case may be.

The narrative in early English poetry is almost always very simply and clearly expressed, with the same kind of repetition of facts and names which, as every parent knows, is what children most require in

story-telling. The emphasis which the final *e* gives to many words seems to help to impress the sentences on the memory, the sense being often shorter than the sound. I use the word 'emphasis' in the same sense as one might speak of a *crotchet* in music, to which you count two, being more emphatic than a *quaver*, to which you count one.

The difficulties arising from the orthography I have hoped to correct by placing a modernised version side by side with Chaucer's text, which can be learnt by heart, or, better, used for reference only, at choice. When it is once understood that spelling in Chaucer's day was chiefly phonetic, readers will no longer be surprised at finding the same word variously spelt: and confusion of eye or brain is remedied by the familiar spelling close at hand.

I believe that some knowledge of, or at least interest in, the domestic life and manners of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries would materially help young people in their reading of English history. The political life would often be interpreted by the domestic life, and much of that time which to a young mind forms the *dryest* portion of history because so unknown, and a mere list of dates and crimes, would then stand out as it really was, glorious and fascinating in its vigour and vivacity, its eager search after knowledge, its enthusiasm for beauty, bravery, and culture.

There is no clearer or safer exponent of the life of the fourteenth century, as far as he describes it, than Geoffrey Chaucer, from whom, I believe, it would be possible to ascertain the state of science in many branches, language, the Church, art, politics, society, and morals to a far fuller extent than has ever been suggested. His mine is but just opened as yet.

Chaucer is, moreover, a thoroughly religious poet, all his merriest stories having a fair moral; even those which are too coarse for modern taste are rather *naïve* than injurious, and his pages breathe a genuine faith in God, and a passionate sense of the beauty and harmony of the divine work. His *Parson's Tale*, tampered with and interpolated as it has doubtless been by some orthodox Catholic scribe, is as full of Wicliffism and true Protestant feeling as many other portions of the *Canterbury Tales* are full of satire against the corruption of the Church: and Chaucer may be said to have striven as hard to propagate with his pen the pith of the new religious views as Albert Dürer strove with his pious pencil, long before Luther sounded the note of victory.

As to the difficulties of understanding Chaucer, they have been greatly overstated. For those who desire to explore the profound depths of philology, Professor Skeat's *Chaucer* (Clarendon Press), and Mr. A. J. Ellis's *Early English Pronunciation*, open a field which it is not my province here to enter. But for simply reading Chaucer for the purpose of enjoyment, an occasional reference to a glossary is all that is requisite; and, with a little attention to a very simple general rule, anybody with moderate intelligence and an ear for musical rhythm can enjoy the lines.

In the first place, it must be borne in mind that the *e* at the end of the old English words was usually a syllable, and must be sounded, as *Aprillë, swootë*, &c.

In the second, Chaucer, unlike his predecessors and contemporaries, appears to have been particular about his metre. It will be found that, if the final *e*'s are sounded or dropped so as to keep the metre even, and the stress on syllables regulated by the necessities of the rhythm, the lines will be enjoyable and intelligible: though of course this must be regarded as a mere rule of thumb, to be taken with its own risks. Thus: —in the opening lines—

Glossary.	
when, showers, sweet	Whan that | *April* | *le* with | his *schowr* | *es* swoote
pierced, root	The drought | of Marche | hath per | cèd to | the roote
bathed, such, liquor	And bath | ud eve | ry veyne | in swich | licour
flower	Of whiche | vertue | engen | drèd is | the flour.—(*Prologue.*)

You see that in those words which I have put in italics the final E must be sounded slightly, for the rhythm's sake.

small birds make	And *sma* | *le fow* | *les* ma | ken me | lodie
sleep, all	That sle | pen al | the night | with o | pen yhe. –(*Prologue.*)

Again, to quote at random—

lark, messenger	The bu | sy *lark* | *e* mess | ager | of day,
saluteth, her, morning	Salu | eth in | hire song | the *mor* | *we* gray.—(*Knight's Tale.*)
legs, lean	Ful *long* | *e* wern | his leg | gus, and | ful lene;
	Al like | a staff | ther was | no calf | y-sene.—(*Prologue*—'*Reve.*')

or in Chaucer's exquisite greeting of the daisy—

always	Knelyng | alwey | til it | unclo | sèd was
small, soft, sweet	Upon | the *sma* | *le, sof* | *te, swo* | *te* gras.—(*Legend of Good Women.*)

How much of the beauty and natural swing of Chaucer's poetry is lost by translation into modern English, is but too clear when that beauty is once perceived; but I thought some modernisation of the old lines would help the child to catch the sense of the original more readily:

for my own rendering, I can only make the apology that when I commenced my work I did not know it would be impossible to procure suitable modernised versions by eminent poets. Finding that unattainable, I merely endeavoured to render the old version in modern English as closely as was compatible with sense and extreme simplicity; and I do not in any degree pretend to have rendered it in poetry. I have, indeed, invariably rejected a graceful version in favour of closeness to the original whenever one had to be sacrificed.

The beauty of such passages as the death of Arcite is too delicate and evanescent to bear rough handling. But I may here quote some of the lines as an example of the importance of the final *e* in emphasising certain words with an almost solemn music.

GLOSSARY.	
speech, fail	And with | that word | his *spech* | *e fail* | *e* gan ;
	For fro | his feete | up to | his brest | was come
overtaken	The cold | of deth | that hadde | him o | ver nome ;
now, arms	And yet | moreo | ver in | his *ar* | *mes* twoo
gone	The vi | tal strength | is lost, | and al | agoo.
without	Only | the in | tellect, | withou | ten more,
heart, sick	That dwel | led in | his *her* | *te* sik | and sore,
began to fail, felt death	Gan *fayl* | *e* when | the *her* | *te felt* | *e* deth.—(*Knight's Tale.*)

There is hardly anything finer than Chaucer's version of the story of these passionate young men, up to the touching close of Arcite's accident and the beautiful patience of death. In life nothing would have reconciled the almost animal fury of the rivals, but at the last such a resignation comes to Arcite that he gives up Emelye to Palamon with a sublime effort of self-sacrifice. Throughout the whole of the *Knight's Tale* sounds as of rich organ music seem to peal from the page; throughout the *Clerk's Tale* one seems to hear strains of infinite sadness echoing the strange outrages imposed on patient Grizel. But without attention to the rhythm half the grace and music is lost, and therefore it is all-important that the scholar be properly taught to preserve it.

I have adhered generally to Morris's text (1866), being both good and popular,[1] only checking it by his Clarendon Press edition, and by

[1] 'No better MS. of the *Canterbury Tales* could be found than the Harleian MS. 7334, which is far more uniform and accurate than any other I have examined; it has therefore been selected, and faithfully adhered to throughout, as the text of the present edition. Many clerical errors and corrupt readings have been corrected by collating it, line for line, with the Lansdowne MS. 851, which, notwithstanding its provincial peculiarities, contains many excellent readings, some of which have been adopted in preference to the Harleian MS.' (Preface to Morris's Revised Ed. 1866.) This method I have followed when I have ventured to change a word or sentence, in which case I have, I believe, invariably given my authority.

Tyrwhitt, Skeat, Bell, &c., when I conceive force is gained, and I have added a running glossary of such words as are not immediately clear on a level with the line, to disperse any lingering difficulty.

In the pictures for my previous book, *Chaucer for Children*, I have been careful to preserve the right costumes, colours, and surroundings, for which I have resorted to the MSS. of the time, knowing that a child's mind, unaided by the eye, fails to realise half of what comes through the ear. Children may be encouraged to verify these costumes in the figures upon many tombs and stalls, &c., in old churches, and in old pictures.

In conclusion I must offer my sincere and hearty thanks to many friends for their advice, assistance, and encouragement during my work; amongst them, Mr. A. J. Ellis and Mr. F. J. Furnivall, to whose kindness, as well as to whose writings for the Chaucer Society, I am enormously indebted.

Whatever may be the shortcomings of the book, and they are doubtless many, I cannot but hope that many young readers of Chaucer's Tales will soon begin to be interested in the picturesque life of the middle ages, and may thus be led to study and appreciate 'The English Homer'[1] by the pages I originally wrote for my own little boy.

GLIMPSES IN CHAUCER.

The reader of so personal and pointed a writer as Chaucer may be sure that in his rhymes there is more than meets the eye: and much that at this distance of time we may fail to see *between the lines*, but which may nevertheless be there.

Every student has a right to light up the poet's canvas as best he can; and until convincing evidence to the contrary is forthcoming, I shall take the liberty to point out a few things which I believe may have hitherto escaped notice, but which tend greatly to link Chaucer to his time, whilst stimulating our interest in his writings.

If these following suggestions explain and account for several peculiarities unnoticed hitherto, or unexplained, they must be accepted like every other working hypothesis as true until proved untrue, or until a better explanation be found.

I. The well thought out individuality of Chaucer's characters, shewing a knowledge of human nature, Shaksperian as far as it goes, such as Palamon, Arcite, Walter, and many more. (Pp. 86, 110.)

---

[1] Roger Ascham.

II. Chaucer's practice, in harmony with the mediæval fashion, of introducing *portraits*, e.g., the probability that the two clearly differentiated characters in the *Knight's Tale* are not only physically represented by two dummy 'kings,' crowned for flattery's sake or some subtler policy; but that two living men are indicated, whose prominence at the period of the Tale's production rendered it advisable so to portray them. (P. 86.)

III. The high respectability of Chaucer's social position, and the possible influence of Philippa his wife with the powerful Duke of Lancaster, whilst serving his Duchess. (Pp. 14, 17.)

IV. Chaucer was probably shortsighted. (P. 9.)

V. The probably constant connection between Chaucer's works and contemporary events, by which I have dated, of course with a query, several of the as yet undated *Canterbury Tales*, as the *Pardoner's, Clerk's, Parson's, Nun's Priest's, Monk's, Knight's, Man of Law's*, and *Miller's Tales* (see Table of Events, pp. xvii.–xxiii.), and even the origin of his great work in a pilgrimage of his own, when 'Harry Bailey,' mine host, may actually have accompanied the party and suggested tale-telling. All the characters in the Prologue look like photographs: and, as the pictures by Van Eyck, Chaucer's contemporary, are crowded with portraits, Chaucer's works were probably popular through their endless little pointed allusions, personal and political, with double meanings and hints which we cannot now decipher, as much as through their novel form, force and ability. It is impossible while reading any poem by Chaucer with care and vigilance, to doubt that this was so.

ACCENT OF CHAUCER.

The scholar should hear a fragment of Chaucer with the correct pronunciation of his day, of which we give an example below, inadequate, of course, but sufficient for the present purpose. The whole subject is fully investigated in the three first parts of the treatise on *Early English Pronunciation, with special reference to Shakspere and Chaucer*, by Alexander J. Ellis, F.R.S.

The *a* is, as in the above languages, pronounced as in *âne, appeler*, &c. *E* commonly as in *écarté*, &c. The final *e* was probably indistinct, as in German now, *habe, werde*, &c.—not unlike the *a* in *China:* it was lost before a vowel. The final *e* is still sounded by the French in singing. In old French verse, one finds it as indispensable to the rhythm as in Chaucer,—and as graceful,—hence probably the modern retention of the letter as a syllable in vocal music.

Ou is sounded as the French *ou*.
I generally as on the Continent, *ee*: never as we sound it at present.
Ch as in Scotch and German.

I quote the opening lines of the Prologue as the nearest to hand.

Whan that Aprille with his schowres swoote
The drought of March hath perced to the roote,
And bathud every veyne in swich licour,
Of which vertue engendred is the flour;
Whan Zephirus eek with his swete breethe
Enspirud hath in every holte and heethe
The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne
Hath in the Ram his halfe cours i-ronne,
And smale fowles maken melodie,
That slepen al the night with open yhe,
So priketh hem nature in here corages—&c.

Whan that Aprilla with his shōōrĕs sohta
The drŏŏkht of March hath pairsed to the rohta,
And bahthed ev'ry vIn in sweech licōōr,
Of which vairtú enjendrèd is the flōōr;
Whan Zephirŏŏs aik with his swaita braitha
Enspeered hath in ev'ry holt and haitha
The tendra croppes, and the yŏŏnga sŏŏnna
Hath in the Ram his halfa cōōrs i-rŏŏnna,
And smahla fōōles mahken melodee-a,
That slaipen al the nikht with ohpen ee-a,
So pricketh hem nahtúr in heer coràhges, &c.

It will thus be seen that many of Chaucer's lines end with a *dissyllable*, instead of a single syllable. *Sote, rote, brethe, hethe*, &c. (having the final *e*), are words of two syllables; *corages* is a word of three, *ages* rhyming with *pilgrim-ages* in the next line. It will also be apparent that some lines are lengthened with a syllable too much for strict *metre*—a license allowed by the best poets,—which, avoiding as it does any possible approach to a doggrel sound, has a lifting billowy rhythm, and, in fact, takes the place of a 'turn' in music. A few instances will suffice:—

'And though that I no wepne have in this place.'

'Have here my troth, tomorwe I nyl not fayle,
Withouten wityng of eny other wight.'

'As any raven fether it schon for-blak.'

'A man mot ben a fool other yong or olde.

I think that any one reading these lines twice over as I have roughly indicated will find the accent one not difficult to practise; and the perfect rhythm and ring of the line facilitates matters, as the ear can frequently guide the pronunciation. The lines can scarcely be read too slowly or majestically.

I must not here be understood to imply that difficulties in reading and accentuating Chaucer are chimerical, but only that it is possible to understand and enjoy him without as much difficulty as is commonly supposed. In perusing the whole of Chaucer, there must needs be exceptional readings and accentuation, which in detail only a student of the subject would comprehend or care for.

The rough rule suggested in the preface is a good one, as far as the rhythm goes: as regards the sound, I have given a rough example.

I will quote a fragment again from the Prologue as a second instance:—

Ther was also a nonne, a prioresse,
That of hire smylyng was ful symple and coy;
Hire gretteste ooth nas but by Seynte Loy;
And sche was cleped Madame Eglentyne.
Ful wel sche sang the servise devyne,

Ther was ahlsoa a nŏŏn, a preeoressa,
That of her smeeling was fŏŏl sim-pland cooy;
Heer graitest ohth nas bŏŏt bee SI-ent Looy,
And shay was cleppèd Màdam Eglanteena.
Fŏŏl well shay sang the *servicĕ divinä*,

Entuned in hire nose ful semyly ;	Entúned in heer nohsa fŏŏl saimaly ;
And Frensch sche spak ful faire and fetysly,	And French shai spahk fŏŏl fēr and faitisly,
Aftur the scole of Stratford atte Bowe,	Ahfter the scohl of Strahtford ahtta Bow-a,
For Frensch of Parys was to hir unknowe.	For French of Pahrees was toh her ŏŏn-know-a.

Observe *simpland* for *simple and:* simple being pronounced like a word of one syllable. With the common English pronunciation the lines would not scan. 'Vernicle,' 'Christofre,' 'wimple,' 'chilindre,' 'companable,' &c., are further instances of this mute *e*, and may be read as French words.

TABLE OF HISTORICAL EVENTS.

At Home.	A.D.	Abroad.	A.D.
		Palestine conquered	1300
		Death of Pope Boniface VIII. Benedict XI. succeeds	1303
Scotch War of Independence: Bannockburn	1314	Robert I. (Bruce) King of Scotland. Wm. Tell's revolt	1306
		Gunpowder adapted to use by Schwarz	1320
		Death of Dante	1321
Birth of the poet called by Chaucer 'the Moral' Gower	1325	Birth of Agnolo Gaddi the painter	1324
Edward III. crowned	1327	Philip VI., Valois, of France began to reign	1328
Birth of the Black Prince	1330	Order of Teutonic knights settled in Prussia	1331
Exports of wool prohibited: foreign clothmakers allowed to settle in England	1336	Death of Giotto, the Florentine painter	1336
John Chaucer (Geoffrey's father) attends Edward III. to Flanders	1338	Sir John Froissart born	1337
		Simon Boccanegra (first doge of Genoa)	1339
Richard Chaucer (Geoffrey's grandfather) assessed to lend 10*l.* (= 100*l.*) towards the French war	1340	Moors defeated by Alfonso XI. of Castile	1340
(?) Birth of *Geoffrey Chaucer*	*ib.*		
Birth of John of Gaunt (Ghent, where he was born)	*ib.*		
		Petrarch crowned at Rome on Easter Day	1341
Marriage between Lionel (Edward III.'s third son) aged 4, and Elizabeth, aged 10	1342	Clement VI. Pope. Boccaccio crowned at the Capitol by Peter the Good	1342
		David II. King of Scotland—11 years a prisoner	*ib.*
Battles of Nevill's Cross and Crécy (former battle celebrated in verse by L. Minot)	1346	Battle of Crécy	1346
Richard Chaucer assessed at 6*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* towards 3,000*l.* given to King (=65*l.* and 30,000*l.*)	*ib.*	The 'Black Death' began in the kingdom of Cathay (China)	*ib.*
Edward III. takes Calais	1347	Rising in Rome. Rienzi 'the patriot'	1347
		Civil war in Holland	*ib.*
Richard Chaucer occupies his newly-built house in Kerion (Crown) Lane	1348	The Plague of Florence	1348
		1,500,000 Jews massacred in Europe, on suspicion of having poisoned the springs	*ib.*

At Home.	A.D.	Abroad.	A.D.
The first great pestilence	1349	Dauphiny annexed to France	1349
Will of Richard Chaucer; also of his stepson, Thomas Heroun, John's brother. John Chaucer disposes of some of his lands	*ib.*	The 'Black Death' in Europe	*ib.*
Order of the Garter instituted, 'honi soit qui mal y pense'	*ib.*	Rienzi's fall and retreat	*ib.*
Poems written on the wars of Edward III. by Lawrence Minot	1352	John II. 'the Good,' King of France	1350
		Peter the Cruel, King of Castile	1352
		Innocent VI. Pope	*ib.*
		Public funds (*monte*) instituted in Italy to relieve the poverty caused by the plague	1353
Sir John Mandeville wrote his *Travels* in English	1354	Death of Rienzi, 'the traitor'	1354
		Battle of Poictiers. King John brought prisoner to London	1356
Poictiers	1356		
Last Age of the Church, by Wiclif	*ib.*		
Geoffrey Chaucer a page to Elizabeth, Countess of Ulster (wife of Lionel, Edward III.'s third son)	1357–59		
Queen Isabella makes a pilgrimage to Canterbury in June	1358	La Jacquerie in France	1358
Edward III. invades France; Chaucer, in the retinue of Edward or Lionel, is taken prisoner; ransomed for 16*l.* (=160*l.*) after Treaty of Bretigny	1359		
John of Gaunt marries Blanche of Lancaster	*ib.*	Peace between the English and French at Bretigny	1360
Second great pestilence	1360		
The Duke of Lancaster (Blanche's father) dies. Title granted to John of Gaunt	*ib.*	King John visits shrine at Canterbury on his way to France, July	*ib.*
Chaucer probably in Edward III.'s service	1361		
Law pleading for the first time in English	1362	War between Florence and Pisa	1362
First publication of *Vision of Piers Plowman* by Langley	*ib.*	Urban IV. Pope	*ib.*
Diet and apparel of each class of the community regulated by statute.	1363	Alliance of Peter the Cruel with the Black Prince	1363
Death of Elizabeth of Clarence and Ulster	*ib.*		
		January. King John returns to England, where he dies suddenly	1364
		Charles V. succeeds	*ib.*
Philippa Chaucer, damoiselle of the Queen's Chamber, receives pension of 10 marks. Royal gifts at Christmas to Geoffrey Chaucer, the King's squire, and Philippa Chaucer	1366	Oct. War with France. Du Guesclin taken prisoner by the English, at Auray	*ib.*
		Hubert van Eyck born, at Maaseyk, (founder of the Flemish school of painting)	1366
(?) Chaucer's *Complaint to Pity* written (his love having rejected him)	1367	The Pope returns to Rome, for the first time since Boniface VIII.	1367
Robes ordered to be given to Philippa Chaucer, and twelve other ladies of the Queen's Chamber	*ib.*		
Froissart leaves the English Court	*ib.*		
A striking clock set up in Westminster	1368		
Lionel Duke of Clarence and earl of Ulster marries Ioland, daughter of Duke of Milan	*ib.*		
Third great pestilence	1369	Flanders passes from French to Burgundian rule	1369

At Home.	A.D.	Abroad	A.D.
		Death of Peter the Cruel, king of Castile. Praised by Chaucer in the *Monk's Tale*. . . .	1369
Lionel Duke of Clarence dies . .	1369		
Queen Philippa dies	*ib.*		
Blanche of Lancaster dies. . .	*ib.*		
Chaucer writes his *Book of the Duchess*	*ib.*		
(?) Chaucer writes the *Pardoner's Tale* (alluding to the pestilence).			
Chaucer sent on a royal mission to France	1370	War between England and France .	1370
Edward III. grants pensions to his late Queen's damoiselles: among them to Philippa Pycard, 100*s*. .	*ib.*	Limoges massacre by the Black Prince	*ib.*
(?) Birth of Occleve	*ib.*	Peace between England and Flemings	*ib.*
		Gregory XI. Pope (Urban IV. dies at Avignon)	*ib.*
		John van Eyck born at Maaseyk, (discoverer of oil-painting, brother of Hubert)	*ib.*
John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, marries Constance, elder daughter, and heiress to the Crown, of Peter the Cruel	1371	Battle of Montiel	*ib.*
(?) About this time *Parliament of Fowls* written	*ib.*		
Duke of Lancaster grants pension of 10*l.* to Philippa Chaucer . .	1372		
Chaucer employed on a royal mission to Florence, Pisa, and Genoa: perhaps met Petrarch at Padua .	*ib.*		
Duke of Lancaster invades France .	*ib.*		
(?) Philippa Chaucer resides at the Savoy in attendance on Constance, 'la Reine de Castile'[1] .	*ib.*		
Nov. Chaucer returns to England .	1373	Death of David of Scotland . .	1373
Death of Sir John Mandeville . .	*ib.*	Bertrand du Guesclin defeats the English at Civray . . .	*ib.*
(?) Birth of Lydgate	.		
Chaucer's *Lyfe of St. Cecile*, afterwards made The *Second Nun's Tale*	*ib.*		
February. Chaucer again goes to Genoa and Florence . . .	1374	Truce between England and France .	1374
A pension of a pitcher of wine daily granted to Chaucer . . .	*ib.*	Death of Petrarch	*ib.*
Chaucer appointed Comptroller of the Customs and subsidies of wools, &c.	*ib.*		
Lives in Thames Street (quits Duke of Lancaster)	.		
(?) Chaucer's *Boethius* . . .	*ib.*		
(?) Chaucer's *Clerk's Tale*; Prologue alludes to Petrarch's death .	1375	Death of Boccaccio	1375
(?) *Annelida and Arcite* written .	*ib.*		
(?) *Complaint of Mars* . . .	.		
The Good Parliament . . .	1376	St. Catherine of Siena . . .	1376
Death of Edward the Black Prince .	*ib.*		
Chaucer gets a second grant of wine and the fine at the Customs, 71*l.* 4*s.* 6*d.* (?=712*l.*) . .	*ib.*		
Chaucer sent on missions to Flanders and France . . .	1376–7	The French land in Isle of Wight, and burn several English towns.	1377
Grand Shows in London, about Feb. 2	1377		
Feb. 12. Chaucer goes on a mission to Flanders	*ib.*		

[1] The Duke of Lancaster so describes her in document of June 13, 1374, quoted in Mr. Furnivall's *Fore-words*.

At Home.	A.D.	Abroad.	A.D.
Edward III. nominates Elizabeth Chaucer nun in St. Helen's, London	1377		
Death of Edward III.	*ib.*		
Accession of Richard, son of Black Prince, aged 11	*ib.*		
Langley, living in London, publishes his second version of his *Vision of Piers Plowman*	*ib.*		
Jan. 16. Chaucer goes on a mission to France to negotiate for the King's marriage with Mary of France	1378	Urban VI. Pope: Clement VII. Antipope	1378
April. Chaucer's grant of wine commuted to annuity of 20 marks (13*l.* 4*s.* 0*d.*) = 135*l.*?	*ib.*		
Wiclif condemned by Papal Bull	*ib.*		
Wiclif issues his translation of the Bible into English	*ib.*		
(?) *Parson's Tale*, full of Wicliffism, begun about this time	*ib.*		
		John I. King of Castile	1379
June 1379 to June 1380: Chaucer's suit against Cecilia Chaumpaign	1380	Charles VI. of France. Afterwards defeated at Agincourt. Cards invented to amuse him	1380
Jan. 1. Philippa Chaucer receives a silver-gilt cup and cover from Duke of Lancaster	*ib.*	Persia invaded by Timour	*ib.*
Poll-tax of 12*d.* levied upon all persons above fifteen years of age	*ib.*	Death of Bertrand du Guesclin, buried in St. Denys	*ib.*
Jan. 1. Philippa Chaucer receives a silver-gilt cup and cover from Duke of Lancaster	1381		
Chaucer receives his wife's pension of 10 marks	*ib.*		
Chaucer's son Lowis born	*ib.*		
Duke of Lancaster pays for Elizabeth Chaucer's noviciate in Abbey of Barking, 51*l.* 8*s.* 2*d.* = 520*l.*	*ib.*		
Wat Tyler's Rebellion	*ib.*		
Savoy Palace destroyed	*ib.*		
(?) *Nun's Priest's Tale* written, with an allusion to 'Jack Straw'	*ib.*		
Jan. 1. Philippa gets a silver gilt cup and cover from Duke of Lancaster	1382		
Chaucer Comptroller of Petty Customs	*b.*		
Archbishop Courtenay tries to pass the Bill against heretics (Wiclif master of Ball. Coll., Oxford)	*ib.*		
Richard II. marries Anne of Bohemia	*ib.*		
(?) *Troilus and Cressida* finished, and sent to Gower and Strode	*ib.*		
Lines to Adam Scrivener alluding to *Troilus*	1383	John I. (the Bastard, and the Good), King of Portugal	1383
Chaucer, jointly with two others, receives for special assiduity at the Customs 46*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* = 470*l.*	*ib.*		
Death of Wiclif, the Reformer	1384		
(?) Chaucer's *House of Fame* written	*ib.*	Bernabo Visconti, Duke of Milan, and 'scourge of Lombardy,' deposed by his nephew, died in prison	1385
Chaucer is allowed to have a deputy at the Customs	1385		

At Home.	A.D.	Abroad.	A.D.
Ghent lost	1385		
(?) *Legend of Good Women* written and sent by Chaucer to Queen Anne at Shene	1386	Spain invaded by us	1386
(?) *Monk's Tale* written, with an allusion to Bernabo Visconti, Duke of Milan	*ib.*		
Duke of Lancaster invades Spain	*ib.*		
Tournament in Smithfield (*vide* Stow)	*ib.*		
Chaucer sits in Parliament (1 month) as Knight of the Shire for Kent. Votes for the Duke of Lancaster.	*ib.*		
The Duke of Gloucester and his council prevail	*ib.*		
Chaucer is entered as 'age de xl. annees et plus, armez de xxvii. ans,' as witness for Richard Lord Scrope	*ib.*		
Commission of Enquiry instituted to examine the state of subsidies and customs	*ib.*		
Chaucer dismissed from his two offices.	*ib.*		
Chaucer's *Balade of Truth*, or 'Good Counsel'	*ib.*	Birth of Fra Angelico da Fiesole, monk and painter, who refused	
Chaucer writes some of his *Canterbury Tales*—? *The Knight's Tale*.	1387	the Archbishopric of Florence	1387
[Did Chaucer make a pilgrimage to Canterbury this year, which suggested his great work?]		Conversion of the Lithuanians.	*ib.*
Chaucer receives his own and wife's pensions	*ib.*		
(?) Chaucer's wife dies this summer.	*ib.*		
Chaucer is appointed Clerk of the King's Works at Windsor.	*ib.*		
And at Westminster, &c., at 2*s.* a day (with perquisites, no doubt), and with a deputy (=400*l.* a year?).	1388		
(?) Prologue to *Canterbury Tales* and *Reeve's Tale*. (?) *Moder of God*	*ib.*		
May 1. The grants of his two pensions of 20 marks each are cancelled by Chaucer's own request, and assigned to John Scalby	*ib.*		
Richard II. insists on governing his own realm.	1389	Boniface IX. Pope	1389
		Victory of the Swiss over Austrians at Näfels	*ib.*
March. Chaucer is deputed to repair Thames banks by Greenwich	1390	Restoration of the Greek language in Italy by Manuel Chrysolaras	1390
Erects scaffolding for the King and Queen to see the jousts in Smithfield in May	*ib.*		
July. Chaucer is ordered to repair St. George's Chapel, Windsor, which is falling.	*ib.*	The French besiege 'the town of Africa,' July 22, and the Saracens on demanding Why? are told, 'because they slew Jesus Christ.' They laugh heartily, pointing out *that* was done by the Jews. Siege progresses	*ib.*
(?) *Man of Law's Tale* (much reviling Saracens)	*ib.*		
September. Chaucer is robbed of 20*l.* 'near the foule Oak.' The King releases him of the sum	*ib.*		
January. Is allowed to appoint a deputy for his work at Westminster and Tower of London	1391	Robert, son of King David, ascends throne of Scotland	1391

At Home.	A.D.	Abroad.	A.D.
Stage-plays by the parish clerks of London in Smithfield . .	1391		
(?) *Miller's Tale* written . . .	*ib.*		
June. The King's writ informs Chaucer that a successor is appointed as Clerk of Works, named John Gedney	*ib.*		
July. The King's writ forbids Chaucer to interfere with Gedney. Chaucer hands over dead stock and tools to him	*ib.*		
Chaucer writes a *Treatise on the Astrolabe* for little Lowis Chaucer	*ib.*		
(?) Chaucer's *Complaint of Venus* .	1392–3		
Chaucer receives his pension as 'late Clerk of the Works' in 1392 and	1393		
Gower's *Confessio Amantis* written .	*ib.*		
Chaucer (living at Greenwich) writes *Envoy to Scogan*, asking him to intercede for him 'where it may fructify': they are both 'hoar and round of shape' . . .	*ib.*		
Duke of Lancaster (aged 54) marries Lady Swynford, sister of Chaucer's supposed wife . . .	1394	Benedict, called XIII., Antipope at Avignon	1394
A new pension of 20*l.* granted to Chaucer (=200*l.*) . . .	*ib.*	Discord in Genoa: many doges appointed	*ib.*
Queen Anne dies at Shene, Surrey. Richard curses the place, and demolishes the palace . .	*ib.*	Henry 'the Navigator,' fourth son of John I., born at Oporto—forerunner of Columbus . . .	*ib.*
(?) Chaucer writes Prologue to *Man of Law's Tale*, containing a 'hit' at Gower and enumerating some of his own works . . .	*ib.*		
Richard II. makes a pilgrimage to Canterbury, where Sir J. Froissart meets him, and presents him with a splendid copy of his own poems	1395		
Chaucer writes *Envoy to Bukton* .	*ib.*		
Persecution of Lollards (Wiclif's followers)	*ib.*		
Chaucer is attorney of Gregory Ballard, to receive seisin of certain lands in Kent	*ib.*		
Richard II. marries Isabella of France, aged 7	1396	Battle of Nicopolis	1396
Plays at Clerkenwell by parish clerks.	1397	Denmark, Norway, and Sweden united into one kingdom . .	1397
Richard II. banishes Henry of Derby, John of Gaunt's son, who is too popular: seizes his inheritance.	*ib.*	Union of Calmar	*ib.*
Some of Chaucer's minor poems written. He obtains numerous loans on his pensions at this time	*ib.*		
Chaucer sends his *Balade to King Richard*	*ib.*	The Mogul Tartars under Timour (or Tamerlane) conquer Hindustan	1398
Chaucer receives grant of a tun of wine a year	1398		
Chaucer gets letters of protection against enemies suing him, from Richard II. He is still described formally as 'our beloved Esquire'	*ib.*		

At Home.	A.D.	Abroad.	A.D.
Chaucer gets continual small loans on his pensions during these two years	1398		
Death of the Duke of Lancaster, Feb. 23	1399	Persia ravaged by Timour . .	1399
Thomas Chaucer receives pension, 20 marks, in lieu of offices granted him by Duke of Lancaster .	*ib.*		
Richard II. lands in Ireland. Henry of Derby returns . . .	*ib.*		
Henry of Derby forces Richard to abdicate, and is crowned as Henry IV.	*ib.*		
Chaucer sends Henry IV. his poem, *To my Empty Purse* . . .	*ib.*		
Chaucer's pension doubled and more.	*ib.*		
Chaucer takes a house in Westminster on a lease of 53 years. Rent 2*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* . . .	*ib.*		
Thomas Chaucer made Constable of Wallingford Castle, &c.=40*l.* a year (=400*l.* now) . . .	*ib.*		
Richard II. dies, probably murdered.			
(?) *Parson's Tale* finished . .	1400	Death of Froissart about this time? .	1400
Oct. 25. Chaucer dies (according to tombstone)	*ib.*		
(Frequent subsequent notices of Thomas Chaucer.)			

PRINCIPAL AUTHORITIES CONSULTED IN THIS BOOK.

Sir S. Meyrick, 'Antient Armour.'

Lacroix, 'Manners, Customs, and Dress during the Middle Ages,' &c., &c.

Skeat, 'Chaucer,' &c.

Skeat, 'The Vision of Piers the Plowman.'

Morris, 'Chaucer' (Aldine edition), 1866, and 'Chaucer' (Clarendon Press), 1874.

Tyrwhitt's 'Chaucer.'

Bell's edition of 'Chaucer's Poetical Works.'

Wright, 'Domestic Manners during the Middle Ages,' and 'Womankind in Western Europe.'

Froissart's 'Chronicles.'

Furnivall, 'Babee's Book,' and 'Trial Forewords' (Chaucer Society), &c.

'Arthur of Britayn.'

Six-Text Edition of Chaucer's 'Canterbury Tales.'

A. Ward, 'Chaucer.'

Le Grand, 'Fabliaux et Contes du XII^e^ et du XIII^e^ Siècle,' 1781.

Barbazan, 'Fabliaux et Contes,' 1808.

CHAUCER
THE TALE-TELLER.

Chaucer's Time.

If we wish to enjoy the celebrated Tales of Geoffrey Chaucer we must first know something about the man who made them, the time at which he lived, and the language which he spoke.

As it is largely owing to Chaucer that we speak English instead of French, or Latin, or a jargon, we really ought to read some of his writings, which are certainly amusing enough to repay the little trouble of mastering the quaint old English spelling, together with certain words which have passed out of use.

Besides, Chaucer in his Tales gives us, perhaps, a better idea of old English manners and customs than any half-dozen other early chroniclers put together. An acquaintance with them will throw light on both the cause and the course of divers historical events, and show us, like so many distant landmarks along a road we have traversed, how far five succeeding centuries have brought us on our way.

Chaucer dwelt in England 500 years ago: he was born about 1340, and lived through a very remarkable period in English as well as Continental history. Consider what was going on in Chaucer's day. Edward III. was on the throne, defying the Pope and holding vast possessions in France. Chivalry, or the science of knighthood, was at its culminating point; the position of women for the first time regarded as important. Gothic art, notably architecture, had reached its full beauty. The culture and refinements of Italy (then in her zenith of learning and power, ahead of all the rest of Europe, and commencing the Renascence movement) were flowing into England through many channels, as history shows, such as the Church, an extensive commerce, and the rising independence of thought.

Great names were flourishing in all countries. Petrarch, Boccaccio, and Rienzi were living in Italy. Bertrand Du Guesclin, the mightiest of French warriors, was Constable of France. Froissart was writing his 'Chronicles.' Switzerland had just won independence under William

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Tell. Dante and Giotto were but just dead, and the Gaddis were carrying on Giotto's work on the superb façade of Florence Cathedral. The Van Eycks were discovering oil-painting in their Maaseyk garden. Fra Angelico was a babe. Cannons and clocks were just coming into use, and the first notes of Protestantism were being sounded by the 'Lollards,' Wyclif and John Ball, the 'mad priest of Kent.' What a glorious time rises up as we review these and many more illustrious names of the fourteenth century! among which Chaucer's name is one of the greatest.

The reign of Edward III. was marked by the great progress made in law, and the institution of trial by jury. Many of the new laws showed the increasing dislike of Englishmen to being domineered over by the Pope, though of course England was then a Roman Catholic country; and an edict, ordaining that legal proceedings should be carried on in the native tongue, instead of French and Latin, proves how an Englishman always likes to know what he is about, instead of being led along in the dark!

Chaucer's Work.

At that time there were of course no printed books, no newspapers, and no 'reading public.' A few people could read, and their books were all written by hand, chiefly in the monasteries, where the monks daintily illuminated the vellum pages with gold and gay pictures. This made books very costly luxuries; so that only the best part, the 'cream' of religious, romantic, and scientific lore, was put into books, and such books were largely read aloud by those who could read to those who could not. Telling stories was naturally a common pastime, and a thoroughly good story-teller was a most popular person.

Chaucer put many of the current legends and romances into wording so graceful and clever that the common versions of the stories were easily driven out of the field. Though, like Shakspere, he did not *invent* most of the stories he wrote, he paid (as Coleridge says) 'that usurious interest which genius always pays for borrowing.'

His own wise and witty thoughts and tender touches which he mingled with his story are the *original* part, the points which make his value: and just as the artists of the old painted windows depicted their saints in the ordinary costume of the day, so Chaucer dressed up the characters of old myths and legends in the habits of his own time. Many personal allusions which we can hardly trace now, and allusions to public events and well-known places and habits, helped to make his poems peculiarly amusing and suggestive, then, both to Court-folk and the common people, so that many copies of his writings were made during his life as well as after. This localising habit of his adds of course to the historical interest of his works.

So strongly did his poems influence the language spoken in England, and indeed the whole structure of English literature, that he was called by Occleve (his contemporary) 'the finder of our fair language,' by Roger Ascham 'the English Homer,' by Spenser 'the pure wellhead of poetry,' and 'the well of English undefiled.'

And that is what I meant by saying that we are greatly indebted to Chaucer for our English language; because, had he chosen to write in a more fashionable tongue, his works were remarkable enough to make it popular, whatever it was, and at that transition time, any writer or speaker of genius might have tilted the balance.

For in Chaucer's day there was actually no *national* language, no *national* literature: English consisting of so many dialects, each having its own songs and stories intelligible to comparatively few; and the Court and educated classes still adhering to Norman-French for both speaking and writing, and to Latin for formal use.

Chaucer, who wrote for the *whole* people, chose the best form of English, which was that spoken by London people, at a time when English was just regaining supremacy over French; and the conquerors and conquered were settling down into one nation. He wrote in this dialect songs and poems finer and wittier than had ever before been written (save in Italian, Greek, and Latin), and the form of English adopted by Chaucer laid the foundation of our present National Tongue.

It is difficult to realise the importance of Chaucer's work till we understand that no country then possessed any literature worthy of the name, save in the dead languages. Italy herself had none till Dante wrote, and he, like Petrarch and Boccaccio, was quite a recent arrival: and the same age which developed in Italy those three towering figures developed in England the equally grand figure of Geoffrey Chaucer, whilst the fuller expansion of influences then in the germ favoured the rise of that other giant of whom he was the forerunner by 200 years, William Shakspere.

Chaucer is, in fact, the first, and in one sense the greatest, of English poets. His knowledge of life, his breadth of sympathy with all classes of people and all modes of thought, his inexhaustible fancy, and his consummate art place him intellectually on a level with Shakspere; and we must remember that without the first great man the second might have never existed. Moreover, though Shakspere claims to have founded our modern drama, Chaucer founded the whole fabric of English poetic literature, and there is no doubt, so dramatic are many of his poems, that had a secular drama [1] been called for in his day, Chaucer would have been a dramatist.

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[1] Plays were then entirely in the hands of the Church, as they are now entirely outside it: they were religious exercises, all drawn from Bible subjects, and played by ecclesiastical officials.

Chaucer's Home.

If we could suddenly spring back into Chaucer's England, we should find a very different world from ours. Very different was the dress, and the language too: far less luxurious the mode of life, even among rich and noble persons: one might fancy they were much less comfortable, but they were satisfied, as they did not miss refinements which they had never dreamed of. The poor were infinitely worse off than our poor, worse fed, and ill-protected by the laws.

Improving as their condition was, people had no carpets in their rooms—nay even in the King's palace. Very few were rich enough to have glass windows. A bed (much less a bed-room) all to one'sself—or a dinner-plate, tankard, or even chair, for one's own sole use, was quite unheard of. There was no paper on the walls, for paper was not invented; no pictures, as we understand them; as for sofas and spring-seats, gas, duplex lamps, fire-stoves and properly constructed chimneys, and a hundred other luxuries which we regard as *necessaries*—they were unknown.

The seats were chiefly benches ranged against the wall. Sometimes a chair, like a pew, made to hold several persons, was brought to do honour to a visitor, but it was a rare luxury. Every big room had its daïs, like the great halls in the Universities, and the fire was usually in the middle of the floor.

The houses in towns were chiefly of timber. Most rooms had blank walls of stone, wood, or plaster and brick; in rich houses they were wainscotted, or coloured to imitate a curtain, and here or there, behind the place of honour, a curtain itself furnished the wall, or tapestry, pictures made in needlework such as we see in museums. This was put up on special occasions and taken down at will. Such hangings, or fresco paintings, either mere stripes of colour, or careful pictures from historical events, were the only coverings for walls in Chaucer's time, in lieu of the many ornaments, such as mirrors, pictures, brackets, which cover ours.

The rooms which Chaucer lived in were probably like those of everyone else. They had bare walls, painted, or hung with tapestries, here and there, a bare floor, strewn with rushes, which must have looked more like a stable than a sitting-room. But the rushes were better than nothing; they kept the feet warm as our carpets do, though they were very untidy and not always very clean.

Chaucer's dinner or breakfast may also be imagined. At meals, he did not go to a big table as we do, the table came to him. A couple of trestles or stands were brought, and a board laid across them (we still occasionally speak of 'the festive *board*'), and over the board a cloth creased in ornamental folds, as waiters sometimes still crease cloths in

patterns in country inns. On the cloth the salt-cellar was placed, to divide the upper from the lower or inferior end of the table. The servants who dined with the 'quality,' sat 'below the salt,' their superiors 'above the salt.' All the guests sat on one side of the table, the waiters stood at the other and served across the board. There was no such thing as coffee or tea. People had meat, and beer, and wine, for breakfast, dinner, and supper all alike. They helped themselves from the common dish, and ate with their fingers and pocket knives, as dinner knives and forks were not invented; and it was thought a sign of good breeding to have clean hands and nails, to wipe the mouth on the sleeve before drinking when the cup was passed down, and not to spit on the table![1]

Plates there were none. But large flat-cakes of bread called *trenchers* (hence our word for a large plate) were used instead, and when the meat was eaten off them, they were given to the poor, for being full of the gravy which had soaked into them, they were too valuable to throw away. When all had finished eating, the biggest bones were thrown on the floor for the dogs, the small ones left on the cloth, and the servants lifted off the board, then removed the trestles, and carried everything away.

At great dinners, such as Chaucer was present at often enough in the King's palace, the courses were numerous; between each, an ornamental dish called a 'subtlety' was placed on the table to amuse the guests, made like a castle, ship, or animal—probably it often suggested the events of the day and bore a double meaning. After dinner fragrant water and a towel were brought to cleanse the hands of those that 'sat at meat'—and very necessary too. The favourite dishes were odd spiced conglomerations, artificially coloured and scented with saffron, cochineal, &c. Our mince pies, marvellous compound of meat, plums, and spice, are the last relic of mediæval 'made dishes.' The common dinner-hour was eleven or twelve o'clock in the day. People rose and retired with the birds then, for candles were too smoky and ill-smelling, as well as too costly, to make it worth while to use them very much. Chaucer often speaks of rising as soon as day broke.

Chaucer's London.

Chaucer lived in London. Whether he was born there is not known; but as his father, John Chaucer, was a vintner in Thames Street, London, it is probable that he was.[2] All that is truly known of his family and

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[1] *The Boke of Curtasye*, Sloane MS. 1986 Brit. Mus., about 1430.

[2] 'In the reign of Henry IV. the young Prince Henry, Thomas, Duke of Clarence,

belongings is indicated in the Table of Events, under the respective dates. Whether he was educated at Oxford or Cambridge, whether he studied for the Bar or for the Church, there is no record to show; but there is no doubt that his education was a good one, and that he worked very hard at his books and tasks, otherwise he could not have grown to be the learned and cultivated man he was. We may imagine his school-days, perhaps at St Paul's Cathedral School, less dismal then than it looks now, with its barred-in, murky playground; and nearest Thames Street of the good London schools. We may suppose he joined in all the riots between the scholars of Paul's and Anthony's (another big school), wherein the two factions called each other severally *Anthony pigs* and *Paul's pigeons*,[1] and troubled the streets and passengers by their blows with satchels full of books—unmannerly little rascals. On holidays he may have fished for eels in the Thames, which he speaks of 'stamping for' (*House of Fame*), or tended bees, whose habits he well knows, in some garden behind the house, or gone bird's-nesting outside the city where 'roke's nests' were so many on the trees, or watched the grand shows in Smithfield and London streets, which formed the only popular amusement before theatres, museums, and galleries existed. He may have seen, if not joined in, the rough water games and wrestlings which took place on holidays, to say nothing of executions, for those were days when people were not fastidious, and any street space might be utilised for such a scene—Chaucer himself later sketched in the *Man of Law's Tale* the well-known look of a prisoner being led to death. We know that he possessed considerable knowledge of the classics, divinity, philosophy, astronomy, as much as was then known of chemistry, and, indeed, most of the sciences. French and Latin he knew as a matter of course, for the better classes used these tongues more than English—Latin for writing, and French for writing and speaking; for, by his translations from the French, he earned, early in life, a 'balade' of compliment from Eustache Deschamps, with the refrain, '*Grant translateur, noble Geoffroi Chaucier.*' It is probable, too, that he knew Italian, for, in his later life, we can see how he has been inspired by the great Italian writers, Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio.

It has been proved that for a time (certainly in 1357) Geoffrey Chaucer, being then seventeen, was a page[2] in the household of Elizabeth, Countess of Ulster, wife of Lionel, second son of King Edward III., a position which he could not have held if he had not been a well-born, or

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John, Duke of Bedford, and Humfrey, Duke of Glocester, being at supper among the merchants of London in the Vintry, Henry Scogan sent to them a ballad.' 'The successors of those vintners and winedrawers that retailed by the gallons, pottle, quart, and pint, were all incorporated by the name of winetunners in the reign of Edward III.' [Stowe, Vintry Ward.] The Chaucers are never mentioned as winetunners.

[1] Because St. Anthony was figured with a pig, and pigeons were bred in Paul's Church.

[2] See also note concerning squires, p. 84.

at least well-educated, person; for a page in those days was very different from what we call a page now—therefore we infer that the Chaucer family had interest at Court; for, without that, Geoffrey could never have entered the royal service.

Most gentlemen's sons were educated or 'finished' by becoming pages. They entered the service of noble ladies, who paid them, or sometimes were even paid for receiving them. Thus young men learned courtesy of manners, and all the accomplishments of indoor and outdoor life—riding, the use of arms, &c.—and were very much what an *aide-de-camp* in the army now is. Chaucer, you see, held a post which many a nobly-born lad must have coveted. His livery as page was a short cloak, a pair of red and black hose (one leg red, the other black) and shoes, with 3*s.* 6*d.* for necessaries [1] (equal to about 36*s.* of our money).

There is a doubtful tradition that Chaucer was intended for a lawyer, and was a member of the Middle Temple, and here, as they say, he was once fined two shillings for beating a Franciscan friar in Fleet Street.

If this be true, it must have been rather a severe beating; for two shillings was a far larger sum than it is now—equal to at least twenty shillings of our money.[1] Chaucer was sometimes angry with the friars at later times in life, and deals them some hard hits in his writings with a relish possibly founded on personal experience of some disagreeable friar.

At any rate, Chaucer never got fond of the friars, and knew that many of the ecclesiastics were very worldly and often bad and mischievous men, who did not always act up to what they professed. This hypocrisy is so evil a thing that Chaucer may be forgiven for his satires upon them.

All the streets known to Chaucer still exist, though they were much less crowded with people in Chaucer's day than now. Fleet Street was outside the city walls, and probably, like the streets of St. John's Wood, or rather some foreign towns, the houses irregular, here and there divided by little gardens, and even green fields. I dare say, when Chaucer walked in those streets, the birds sang over his head, and the hawthorn and primrose bloomed where now the black smoke and dust would soon kill most green things. Thames Street was where Chaucer long lived in London, both in boyhood and in middle life, and no doubt that street, like the river, was less dirty than it is now; at any rate it was newer; but, at one time in his life at least, it is certain that he occupied a tenement at Aldgate, granted him for life, which formed part of an old prison; the lease, dated 1374, is still extant. It is probable that at another he lived in the beautiful Savoy Palace, with John of Gaunt; in 1393 he was living at Greenwich, and at the end of his life he had a

[1] Authorities are divided as to the means of ascertaining the value of money in the 14th century. Some multiply the sum by six, some by twelve and even eighteen. If we multiply by ten we shall not be very far from the mark.

house in Westminster, said to be nearly on the same spot on which Henry VII.'s Chapel now stands, and close to the Abbey, where he is buried.

In those days it was the fashion, when the month of May[1] arrived, for everybody, rich and poor, to get up very early in the morning, to gather boughs of hawthorn and laurel, to deck all the doorways in the street, as a joyful welcoming of the sweet spring-time. Chaucer alludes more than once to this beautiful custom. The streets must have been full of fragrance then. May was the usual season for the annual holidays, any outing or pilgrimage, or pleasant undertaking. He also tells us how he loved to rise up at dawn in the morning, and go into the fresh green fields, to see the daisies open. You may guess from this how much nearer the country was to the town 500 years ago. There were so many fewer houses built then, that within a walk you could get right into the meadows from Thames Street.

London was also much quieter. There were no railways—such things had never been heard of. There were not even any cabs or carriages. Sometimes a market cart might roll by, but not very often, and then everybody would run out to see what the unaccustomed clatter was all about. People had to walk everywhere, unless they were rich enough to ride on horseback, or lived near the river, as most people tried to do. In that case, they used to go in barges or boats on the Thames, as far as they could; for, strange as it may seem, even the King had no coach then.

I am afraid Geoffrey Chaucer would not recognise that 'dere and swete citye of London' in the great, smoky, noisy, bustling metropolis we are accustomed to, and I am quite sure he would not recognise the language; and presently I will explain why, though Chaucer wrote and spoke English, it was very different from what we speak now. You will see, as you go on, that the spelling and the construction of the sentences are both obsolete, so much so that I have had to put a second version side by side with Chaucer's lines, which you will understand more readily; and when properly read to you, you will see how different is the sound. These words were all pronounced slowly, almost with a drawl, while we nowadays have got to talk so fast, that no one who lived then would have been able to follow what we say without great difficulty.

Chaucer's Appearance.

Chaucer's aspect can only be traced from his allusions to himself, and from the sole authentic portraits of him done from memory by his young

[1] It must not be forgotten, in reading praises of warm and sunny May, often now a bleak and chilly month, that the seasons were a fortnight later at that time, May-day coming therefore in the middle of the month, and May ending in the middle of June.

friend and pupil Occleve, while that memory was still strong upon him. They can be seen in the British Museum, two small miniatures painted in the margins of Harl. MS. 4866 and another.

On these two poor little paintings are founded the many portraits scattered over the country. The same features recur in all; the peculiar aquiline nose, mouth a little drooping, eyes downcast, forked beard and fair complexion are the same in all. The face seems shrewd and benevolent, wise, thoughtful, almost pathetic, in which we may trace the humorous satire beneath the calmness. Words of his own, late in life, show that he was rather fat, his face small and fair. In manner he seemed 'elvish,' or shy, 'doing to no wight dalliaunce' (chaffing no one), with a habit of staring on the ground, 'as if he would find a hair,' a habit common with short-sighted people; and that Chaucer was short-sighted these hints, his studious ways, and the absence of description of distant scenery in his poems, seem to indicate.

There are repeated hints of his retiring habits. All day he worked hard (at the Customs books), and then, instead of recreation, he came home and applied himself to another book, 'dumb as a stone,' 'studying and reading alway' till his 'head aked' and his look became dazed; so that his neighbours, living at his very door, looked on him as 'an *hermit*,' although (he adds) he was no ascetic, 'his abstinence was little' (*House of Fame*).

His dress was that of the ordinary clerk. He wore a hood of dark colour, with a long tail to it, which indoors hung down his back, and out of doors was twisted round his head to keep his hood firm. This tail was called a *liripipe* or *tippet*.

He did not wear a modern coat and trousers, but a sort of gown or tunic, which in our picture is grey and loose, with large sleeves, bright red stockings, and black boots. In the other the gown is black. But on great occasions, and in his official attendance at Court, he probably wore a close-fitting tunic, with a rich belt and buckle about his hips, a dagger, and perhaps a wreath of flowers around his hair. Bright colours in dress were the fashion then, as dark ones are now: men and women alike dressed in red and blue and yellow then, and when they walked in the streets they looked as people look in pictures.

As we have said, Chaucer the King's Esquire was probably no ascetic, and many as are his hints that he would prefer a fuller purse, we may fairly take him as a combination of courtier and scholar. Like the poor clerk in the Prologue, 'he would sooner have at his bed's head twenty books clothed in black and red than robes rich, fiddle, or psaltery,' and we suspect that his manner was the same. 'Not a word spake he more than was needful: all that he spake was of high prudence, and short, and quick, and full of sentence' (weight). This is like a courtier as much as a clerk.

Useful dress, that is, dress wearable during business occupations, is always plain, commonly dark, and Chaucer, the Custom-house master, like all the middle classes, wore as useful and quiet a garb as a tunic and hood can be: the hood was so continually worn, and of course so much missed when removed, that to go 'hoodless' into wind or rain was held the acme of self-abnegation:[1] hence, no doubt, the courtesy of taking off the hood to a superior originated, the last phase of which is still raising the hat. Elderly people wore the hood, or, in the case of women, some wimple or coif, indoors as well as out.

But as regards young people, or officials attached to Court, on festive occasions, especially at tournaments, nothing can exceed the fantastic brilliancy of costume in the fourteenth century, which, though moderate and very picturesque in Edward III.'s reign, rose into the utmost extravagance in that of Richard II. The long-toed boots were fastened to the knee or waist with chains occasionally, and the tippets, or tails, hanging from the sleeves had to be knotted up to avoid trailing on the ground, and coats of arms and mottoes were embroidered all over coats and gowns.

Probably Chaucer all his life adhered to the less grotesque fashions of Edward: but it is likely that as a page and squire he wore parti-coloured clothes, one side one colour, and the other side different; a coat of cloth 'embroidered all full of fresh flowers:' and 'strutted out his hair like a fan' like any other youthful dandy; though the sumptuary laws (for regulating the dress, and even diet, of each class) forbade, or strove to forbid, people in his rank from wearing silk and many jewels.

Chaucer's Court Life.

Chaucer's connection with the Court makes it natural for him to have lived within reach of it during the greater part of his life; and it is pleasant to think that this great poet was valued and beloved in his day by the highest powers in the land. He held, at various times, posts in the King's household, which brought him more or less money, such as Valet of the King's Chamber, the King's Esquire, &c.; and he found a fast friend in John of Gaunt, one of the sons of King Edward III. What these offices were, and what were Chaucer's duties and salary, you will be curious to know.[2] Edward III. had thirty-seven squires of the household, and Geoffrey Chaucer's name occurs as seventeenth on the list in 1368. The salary, like that of many a post in our Queen's household, was merely nominal, not much more than pays for the uniform. But

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[1] 'Death of Blanche the Duchess,' l. 1270.

[2] 'Domus Regis Edwardi Tercii was the house of very pollicie and flower of England, the first setter of Certainetie amongest his domesticall meyne, upon a groundid rule.' Harl. MS. 642. Edward IV.'s Black Book.

Chaucer may have had private property. His duties may be guessed from those of Edward IV.'s similar squires, forty in number, 'to be chosen men of their possession, worship, and wisdome:' attending the King's person, 'assaying' his meals as a safeguard against poison, which every king dreaded, carrying the torches before him, &c. These privileged gentlemen slept two in a bed, 'as they be coupled bed-fellowes by the Gentlemen Ushers,' and were allowed daily rations of meat and ale, and a uniform, or 'liverey,' with salary of 7½*d.* a day, equal to about 100*l.* a year our money. And we are told 'these Esquires of Household be accustomed winter and summer, in afternoons and in evenings, to draw to Lordes Chambers within Court, there to keep honest company after their cunning in talking of Cronicles of Kings, and of other Pollicies, or in piping or harping, singing, or other acts martials, to help to occupy the Court, and accompany estrangers, till the time require of departing.' Chaucer's Court-life must have moulded his views and polished his manners, and brought him considerable influence. There he fell in love with a fair lady whom he wooed for eight years, and to whom he wrote a beautiful poem called the '*Complaint of Pitie*, how Pity is dead and buried in a gentle heart.' For she would have nothing to say to Geoffrey Chaucer and his love: and he got over it in time.

In 1359, Chaucer being a soldier, served in the army under this King, in an attack upon France, and was taken prisoner. It is supposed he was detained there about a year; and, being ransomed by Edward, for the sum of 16*l.* (=160?), when he came back to England, he married one of the Queen's maids of honour, whose name was Philippa. Who she was is not certainly known. Possibly she was Philippa, the younger daughter of Sir Payne de Roet, of Hainault,[1] who came over to England in the retinue of Queen Philippa, also of Hainault. After Philippa Chaucer's marriage, the Queen gave her an annual pension of ten

[1] Dr Morris writes:—'The old supposition that the Philippa whom Chaucer married was the daughter of Sir Paon de Roet (a native of Hainault and King of Arms of Guienne), and sister to Katherine, widow of Sir Hugh Swynford, successively governess, mistress, and wife of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, was founded on heraldic grounds. The Roet arms were adopted by Thomas Chaucer. Then Thomas Chaucer was made (without the slightest evidence) Geoffrey's son, and Philippa Roet was then made Geoffrey's wife.' And again, 'It is possible that Philippa Chaucer was a relative or namesake of Geoffrey, and that he married her in the spring or early summer of 1374.' It is, however, much less likely that there were so many Chaucers about the Court, unconnected with each other, than that the common supposition is correct. At any rate, *until there is any evidence to the contrary*, this tradition may be fairly accepted. The recent discovery by Mr. Hunter in the Record Office, of Thomas Chaucer's deed, sealed with a seal bearing the legend 'S Ghofrai Chaucer,' seems to support the tradition. There are entries mentioning Philippa Chaucer in 1366, 1372, and 1374. The former names her as one of the ladies of the bedchamber to Queen Philippa, who conferred the annuity of ten marks in September 1366. In 1372 John of Gaunt conferred on Philippa Chaucer an annuity of 10*l.* (equal to 100*l.*). Her name is mentioned when the grant to Chaucer of a pitcher of wine daily is commuted into money payment, June 13, 1374, by John of Gaunt (again a pension of 10*l.*), for good services rendered by the Chaucers to the said Duke, his consort, and his mother the Queen. I may add that a Philippa Picard (possibly daughter of Henry Picard, vintner and mayor of

marks[1] (=50*l.*), which was continued to her by the King after Queen Philippa died. Sir Payne Roet's other daughter, Katherine, married Sir Hugh Swynford, and was afterwards successively mistress and third wife of the Duke of Lancaster. She was also for years governess to his children.

What Chaucer's wife looked like, we may imagine. We do not know what she was like in the face, but we can ascertain the fashion of the garb she wore. I like to believe she had long yellow hair, which Chaucer describes so often and so prettily. Chaucer's wife wore one of those curious head-dresses like crowns, or rather like boxes, over a gold net, with her hair braided in a tress, hanging down her back, such as we may see in ancient missals, windows, or effigies on tombs of the fourteenth century. She had a close green[2] dress, with tight sleeves, reaching right down over the hand, to protect it from the sun and wind; and a very long skirt, falling in folds about her feet, sometimes edged with beautiful white fur, ermine, or a rich grey fur, called vair. The colour of this grey fur was much liked, and when people had light grey eyes, of somewhat the same colour, it was thought very beautiful. Many ancient songs describe pretty ladies with 'eyes of vair' (Fr. *verre*, glass). Chaucer describes the pretty Prioress with eyes grey as glass. White glass then had a decidedly grey-green shade.

On festive occasions Chaucer's wife wore dresses far more splendid than any to be seen now—dresses of all colours, worked in with flowers and branches of gold, sometimes with heraldic devices and strange figures, and as many jewels as were allowed her by the 'sumptuary laws' which regulated the costume. People did not wear short sleeves then, but long ones, made sometimes very curiously with streamers hanging from the elbow; a long thin gauze veil, shining with silver and gold; and narrow pointed shoes, much longer than their feet, which, they thought, made the foot look slender. These were often cut into open patterns (as now), likened by Chaucer to 'Paul's windows,' meaning the rich Gothic windows of the *old* St. Paul's Cathedral. If ladies had not had such long shoes, they would never have showed beneath their long embroidered skirts, and they would always have been stumbling when they walked. It was a very graceful and elegant costume that Chaucer's wife wore. When she walked out of doors, she had tall clogs to save her pretty shoes from the mud of the rough

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London in the reign of Edward III., who feasted the Kings of England, France, Scotland, and Cyprus at one banquet) received (Jan. 20, 1370,) 100*s.* pension as *veilleresse* to the late queen. Mr. Furnivall doubts that Geoffrey Chaucer was married before 1372; in which case his marrying the daughter of a brother vintner is not unnatural, and the Philippa Chaucer named as in the Queen's service in 1366 *might* have been Geoffrey's sister. Still the pension of 100*s.* does not tally with the pension of Chaucer's *wife*.

[1] A mark was 13*s.* 4*d.* of our money, but the buying power of money was eight or ten times greater than at present. So that, although ten marks was only 6*l.* 12*s.* of our currency, it was fully equal to 50*l.*

[2] Green was a favourite colour of the time.

streets; and when she rode on horseback with the Queen, or her husband Chaucer, she either rode astride, or sat on a pillion, and placed her feet on a narrow board, called a *planchette.*

Now, perhaps, you would like to know whether Chaucer had any little children. We do not know much about Chaucer's children. We know he had a little son called Lewis, because Chaucer wrote a treatise for him when he was ten years old, 1391, and motherless, to teach him how to use an instrument he had given him, called an *astrolabe.*[1] Chaucer must have been very fond of Lewis, since he took so much trouble for him, and he speaks to him very kindly and lovingly. Several of his poems hint at his love of children, such as in the tender description of Ugolino's death, and Constance's and Griselda's trouble.

If Chaucer was married before 1366, it is likely that he had other children; and some people say he had an elder son, named Thomas, and a daughter Elizabeth,[2] who were provided for by John of Gaunt.

John of Gaunt, who was Chaucer's patron as I told you, was very kind to Thomas Chaucer, and gave him several posts in the King's household, as he grew up to be a man. And John of Gaunt heard that Elizabeth Chaucer wished to be a nun; and, in 1381, we find that he paid a large sum of money, 51*l.* 8*s.* 2*d.*, fully equal to 500*l.* of our money, for her to become a *noviciate* (that is, for her to learn to be a nun) in the Abbey of Barking.

Another Elizabeth Chaucer was nominated nun in St. Helen's, London, by Edward III., in 1377, probably through John of Gaunt's influence: but whether this is so, or who this Elizabeth was, we do not know; possibly she was a sister or niece of the poet.

Now I must quit the subject of Chaucer's wife and children, and go on to Chaucer himself.

Chaucer was, as I told you, the friend of one of the sons of the King, Edward III. Not the eldest son, Edward the Black Prince, the great warrior, nor Lionel, the third son, whom he had served when a boy, but the fourth son, John of Gaunt, the ablest of the brothers, who had a great deal of power with the King.

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[1] *Astrolabe:* a machine used at sea to measure the distances of stars. The quadrant now in use has superseded the astrolabe.

[2] Thomas Chaucer died in 1434, when his only child was thirty. Elizabeth Chaucer's novitiate was paid for by John of Gaunt in 1381. If Elizabeth Chaucer was about sixteen in 1381, she would have been born about 1365; and, therefore, as far as dates are concerned, either Thomas or Elizabeth may well have been elder children of the poet; supposing he married in 1361–64. Moreover, John of Gaunt's interest in both of these persons, Thomas Chaucer and Elizabeth Chaucer, gives this a colour of probability. On the other hand, supposing Geoffrey Chaucer married about 1373, according to Mr. Furnivall's opinion, or after 1368, when his name appears in the list of royal squires lodging in the palace, Thomas may still have been his son: receiving offices at Court from the Duke of Lancaster, and being chief butler to Richard II. late in the reign; then to his successor; marrying Matilda Burghersh in 1403, and dying like his father at about sixty years of age. Should this be so, the younger Elizabeth Chaucer, nun, may have been some near relation. See Aldine ed. *Chaucer*, vol. i. p. 86.

John of Gaunt was the same age as Chaucer.

In 1359, when John of Gaunt was only nineteen (the year that Chaucer went with the army to France), he married Blanche, daughter of the Duke of Lancaster (which title was afterwards granted to himself), and there were famous joustings and great festivities of every kind. In this year, it has been supposed, Chaucer wrote a poem, *The Parliament of Birds*, to celebrate the wedding, in which Edward III., the Black Prince, John of Gaunt, and his two rivals figure as birds. But the best authorities date this poem fifteen years later.

When Chaucer came back to England, and got married himself, there are many instances recorded of John's attachment to both Chaucer and Philippa all his life. Among others we may notice his gifts to Philippa of certain 'silver-gilt cups with covers,' on January 1, 1380, 1381, and 1382, probably bearing the new *three marks* of the organised guilds.

When John of Gaunt was in power he never forgot Chaucer. When he became unpopular it was Chaucer's turn to be faithful to him; and faithful he was, whatever he suffered, and he did suffer for it severely, and became quite poor at times, as you will see. Directly John came into power again up went Chaucer too, and his circumstances improved. There are few friendships so long and so faithful on both sides as this was.

Many poems by Chaucer were written at the instigation of John of Gaunt, or at least flavoured with delicate and affectionate flattery; some of them all but name him.

Chaucer's Position.

Chaucer's position in life was undoubtedly that of a gentleman.[1] His parentage was respectable, if not influential, as the vintners held much the same social status as our great brewers or wine merchants, and the Vintry was repeatedly visited by royalty. There is no record of a Chaucer being Mayor of London, but contemporary vintners held that position. Chaucer's father, who was apparently well off, had interest at Court, and attended Edward III. and Queen Philippa on their memorable journey to Flanders, when Edward was proclaimed Vicar of the Holy Roman Empire on the left bank of the Rhine. His mother had an uncle who was 'a moneyer.' His grandfather, Richard le Chaucer, also a vintner, lived in a house at the corner of Crown Lane, which he built himself, and had a monument in the church of St. Thomas's Hospital as only a well-to-do man would have had. He died, with a stepson, in the

[1] The doubt on this subject, to which Mr. Furnivall inclines, is based on the difficulty of estimating the position of the superior vintners, and royal 'valets' and 'squires.' I enumerate the facts which seem to denote his social status, because it has been so often asserted that Chaucer was of low origin and held no position. I can only say I am open to conviction on this point, and on every other; but the facts hitherto adduced appear to me to point all the other way.

first pestilence of this reign (see Table of Events). Geoffrey was well placed as royal page in his youth, as royal valet and king's envoy in manhood, a position which must have brought him across all the eminent persons of his time, Froissart, Wiclif, Bertrand Du Guesclin perhaps, Petrarch, Boccaccio, all the nobles foreign and English. His wife was Queen Philippa's maid of honour, and subsequently shared a similar position in the household of Constance, second wife of the Duke of Lancaster, with Lady Sanche Blount and Lady Blanche de Trumpington—no mean position. It is not proven that the Duke's third wife, Lady Swynford, Sir Payne Roet's daughter, was sister to Chaucer's wife: but it is still less proven that such relationship did not exist. In either case the Chaucers were well regarded and supported by royalty all their lives.

Thomas Chaucer, who died in 1435, was very probably Chaucer's son.[1] He held posts at Court through the bounty of the Duke of Lancaster, Henry IV. and Henry V., and rose to a position of considerable distinction.[2] He married Matilda, daughter and co-heiress of Sir John Burghersh, and on his tomb, among numerous shields indicating the various noble alliances of the house of Burghersh, quartered the arms of Roet with those of Chaucer—a very odd proceeding if he had no right. It is therefore supposed that he was connected with the Roet family. Thomas Chaucer's daughter was married three times: to Sir John Phelip, to the Earl of Salisbury, and last to William de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk. She inherited a great property from her father, Thomas Chaucer, who himself inherited (or bought) the reversion of estates from Isabella, wife of Stephen Haytfield.

Geoffrey Chaucer is not mentioned in the Duke of Lancaster's will; but there is no doubt that they were allies, mutually supporting each other, which looks very like intimacy.

It does not seem to us likely that the tavern, known to be owned (not necessarily served) by Richard le Chaucer, was the early home of Geoffrey, who could not have derived from rough sailors and riotous drinkers the finished manners which fitted him for royal embassies, and made him the lover of high-born ladies, as the gay young soldier-courtier and troubadour certainly was. Whoever the lady to whom he addressed his *Compleynt of Pité* might have been, she was above him in position; and he speaks of himself as unhappy for her sake in that poem and in the *Dethe of Blanche*. He also, I imagine, means himself by the 'jealous swan,' singing himself to death (*Parliament of Birds*), as though he had raised his eyes to royalty itself.[3]

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[1] As Mr. Furnivall points out, this has not been proved.

[2] See Aldine Edition of *Chaucer*, vol. i. p. 86.

[3] Why not? in the curious half-Platonic way in which the well-born troubadours were expected to serenade and worship great ladies. Froissart, who was also a

married another wife in the next year, Constance, daughter of Pedro the Cruel, and through her claimed later to be King of Castile, a title he actually assumed when he gave up the hope of ruling his own country. It was during the second Duchess's lifetime that he did so much for Chaucer, who himself implies that he was a 'climbing' man in these days of John's prosperity (*Good Counsel*).

I will give you further instances of this.

Soon after Chaucer's return from his journey to Florence, he received a grant of 'a pitcher of wine' every day 'from the hands of the King's butler.' This seems like a mark of personal friendship more than formal royal bounty; but it was worth a good deal of money a year. Less than two months afterwards he received, through John of Gaunt's goodwill, a place under Government called 'Comptrollership of the Customs' of the Port of London (June, 1374). This was a very important post, and required much care, shrewdness, and vigilance; and a condition was attached, that all the accounts of his office were to be entered in Chaucer's own handwriting—which means, of course, that Chaucer was to be always present, seeing everything done himself, and never leaving the work to be done by anybody else, except when sent abroad by the King's own royal command. Only three days after this, John of Gaunt himself made Chaucer a grant of 10*l.* a year for life, in reward for all the good service rendered by 'nostre bien ame (aimé) Geffray Chaucer,' and 'nostre bien ame Philippa sa femme,' to himself, his duchess, and to his mother, Queen Philippa, who was dead. This sum of money does not sound much; but it was a great deal in those days, and was fully equal to 100*l.* now. Chaucer probably quitted the Savoy for Thames Street, where he had lived as a boy.

The very next year the King gave Chaucer the 'custody' of a rich ward (a ward is a person protected or maintained by another while under age), named Edmond Staplegate, of Kent; and when this ward married Chaucer received a large sum of money (104*l.*=1,040*l.*?).[1] He was also assigned the wardship of William de Solys, of Solys in Kent.[2]

Then Chaucer's care in the Customs' office detected a dishonest man, who tried to ship wool abroad without paying the lawful duty; this man was fined for his dishonesty, and the money, 71*l.* 4*s.* 6*d.*, was made over to Chaucer—a sum equal to 700*l.*

In 1377, at Candlemas, in February, a great show was made by the citizens for the disport of the young Prince Richard, son of the Black Prince. A mummery by torchlight, with music and maskers, rode

[1] In these cases, the sum received on the marriage of the ward was legally a fine on the marriage.

[2] Chaucer clearly had influence in Kent, which he afterwards represented in Parliament. He frequently shows familiarity with Kentish scenes: *e.g.*, he twice alludes in the Prologue to the Kentish furnaces, the Weald of Kent being then like our Black Country, a great smelting district, its wood answering to our coal.

'from Newgate through Chepe, over the bridge, through Southwarke, and so to Kennington beside Lambhith' (Lambeth), where the young prince was staying with his mother and John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, and other great lords. They made little Richard offerings of jewels by throwing the dice with him, taking care that he won: and there was a great feast afterwards. Probably Chaucer was present: he was then living in Thames Street as Comptroller of the Customs: and would naturally have gone thence to Lambeth by boat to see the fun, as he was still described as the King's esquire, and his wife was in Constance of Lancaster's train.

In the same month of February Chaucer was dispatched with Sir Thomas Percy on a secret mission to Flanders, returning in April, and from then to 1379 he was constantly employed on embassies abroad. Such missions speak for his tact, acumen, and polished bearing and address, and probably for his linguistic acquirements.

CHAUCER'S ADVERSITY.

The Black Prince died in 1377, and Edward III. did not long survive him. Then the Black Prince's little son, Richard, who was only eleven years old, became King of England; but as he was too young to reign over the country, his three uncles governed for him. These three uncles were John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster; the Duke of York; and the Duke of Gloucester.

And all this time Chaucer was very well looked after, you may be sure, for the Duke of Lancaster was then more powerful than the King. Chaucer was repeatedly employed in Flanders and France on missions: he was still Comptroller of the Customs; and, before long, John gave him a second post of a similar kind, called 'Comptroller of the Petty Customs.' About this time Chaucer sent to Queen Anne, whom the boy King had just married (1382), his *Legends of Good Women*, written, says Lydgate, at her request.

But all this good luck was not to go on for ever. The people were not so fond of the Duke of Lancaster as Chaucer was, because, in governing them, he was very ambitious and severe.

It is quite possible for a man's public character to be tyrannical while his private character may be courteous and attractive: and the Duke of Lancaster's unpopularity was soon visited on his supporters, and among them Chaucer.

This was a very troublous time. The Crown, represented by the King's uncles; the great barons; and the people, or lower classes, formed three great opposing parties, each claiming all the power. At last some of the barons sided with the King's party, and others sided with the people, so that there were then two parties quarrelling and

hating each other. The Duke of Lancaster would have liked to be king himself, but the people were unhappy, and discontented with his action as Regent, and he began to lose power in the kingdom.

The indignation against the Duke of Lancaster, 'whose doings were ever contrary,' and the people's suspicion that his ambition might lead to violent designs upon the boy Richard, whom they loved for his father's sake, is shown in the curious resolution of the insurgents under Wat Tyler, who 'swore to admit of no king of the name of *John*'—a broad hint to the unpopular Duke that he would gain nothing by Richard's removal. How dangerous John felt the people's anger is shown by his speech in October 1377, warmly denying such accusations: and his flight in 1381, when the enraged peasantry destroyed his Savoy Palace.

During John of Gaunt's absence in Portugal, in pursuit of a visionary crown, the people plotted yet more busily against him. They complained that he had given government posts to men who did not do their duty, and neglected their work, and Chaucer was one of them.

Then there was what was called a 'Commission of Inquiry' appointed, which means a body of men who were free to examine and reform everything they chose in the country. Their power was to last a whole year; and these men looked into all that Chaucer had done in the 'Customs' offices. They did not find anything wrong, as far as we know, but still they sent away Chaucer in disgrace, just as if they had. And this deprived him of his chief means of subsistence. It was a harsh thing to do, and unjust, if they were not certain he had been neglecting his work; and John of Gaunt was out of the country, and could not help him now. This was in the year 1386.

A great deal has been said and written about this matter. The records of Chaucer's work at the Customs, 'written with his own hand,' are not to be found: indeed no scrap of his writing seems to exist, though close search has been made, otherwise it would prove how his Customs work was done. It seems as though the records had been collected, either by enemies to destroy, or by antiquaries to preserve and cherish; and until these records turn up we cannot prove his innocence nor enjoy the interest of seeing his handwriting. Some people still believe that Chaucer really did neglect his duties, though the conditions that he should attend to everything himself had been so very strict;[1] that he had probably absented himself, and let things go wrong. But such people forget that these conditions were formally done away with in 1385, when Chaucer was finally released from personal drudgery at the Customs, and allowed to have a *deputy*, or person under him to do his work.

They forget, too, how Chaucer had plunged into political matter

[1] See Chambers's *Encyclopædia*, 'Chaucer.'

directly afterwards, at a time when party feeling was intensely strong, the people and John of Gaunt being violently opposed to each other; and how Chaucer took up the part of his absent friend warmly, and sat in the House of Commons as representative of Kent, one of the largest counties of England, on purpose to support the ministers who were on John of Gaunt's side. This alone would be enough to make the opposing party hate Chaucer, and some unpopular vote of his in Parliament was doubtless the real reason of their dismissing him from both his offices in the Customs as soon as ever they were able, to punish him for his attachment to the Duke of Lancaster's cause; and imaginary misdemeanours were made the stalking-horse.

But Chaucer never wavered or changed. And his faithfulness to his friend deserves better than the unjust suspicion that his disgrace was warranted by neglect of his duties. Chaucer was too good, and too pious, and too honourable a man to commit any such act. He submitted to his disgrace and his poverty unmoved; and after the death of his wife Philippa, which happened in the following summer, nothing is known of him for several years, except that he was in such distress that he was actually obliged to part with his two pensions for a sum of money in order to pay his debts. Chaucer's pathetic *Good Counsel* was probably written about the time of his loss. It is full of confidence that 'truth will deliver him' in the long run: and one line, 'Pain thee not all the crooked to redress,' looks as though he regretted having meddled in political misdoings, though with the best intentions. This poem reflects the disappointment and sadness at his changed lot which he must have felt.

During all the eventful years that followed Edward III.'s death, up to this time, Chaucer had been writing busily, in the midst of his weightier affairs. The *Complaint of Mars*, *Boece*, *Troilus and Cressida*, the *House of Fame*, and the *Legend of Good Women*, all of which I hope you will read some day, were written in this period;[1] also some reproachful words to his scrivener, who seems to have written out his poems for him very carelessly. If Chaucer's downcast eyes mean short sight or any weakness, it may well be that he employed a scrivener constantly to write from dictation, and this may account for the absence of poems or other documents outside his Customs' books in his own handwriting.

From 1370 to 1387 was the brightest part of Chaucer's life; when most gifts came to him and his from the royal bounty, as is clear from my Table of Historical Events: and when he was mostly absent from England on royal commissions. This fair time seems to have closed with his

[1] At this time Chaucer was over forty years old as the clerk entered him, 'xl and upwards, having borne arms for twenty-seven years,' when witness for Sir Richard Scrope in 1386.

wife's death : at least, after 1387 there was a notable diminution of gifts. It is possible that Chaucer may have owed something to his wife's influence, for during his absences abroad Philippa seems to have enjoyed the friendship of the Duke and Duchess of Lancaster. But Chaucer's finest literary work was chiefly done after this prosperous period was over, and John of Gaunt had lost his influence. There were then no more silver-gilt cups for New Year's gifts : no more sinecure offices : but then he built himself monuments of immortal beauty.

Chaucer's Politics.

In 1389 there was another great change in the government. The King, being of age, wished to govern the country without help, and he sent away one of his uncles, who was on the people's side, and asked John of Gaunt to come back to England. John of Gaunt's son, Henry of Hereford, was made one of the new ministers. Immediately Chaucer was thought of. He was at once (July 12, 1389) appointed Clerk at the King's Works at Westminster—an office of some importance—which he was presently permitted to hold by deputy; and his salary was two shillings per day—that is 73*l.* a-year, equal to about 730*l.* of our money.

It seems that Chaucer kept this appointment only for two years. Why, we cannot tell. We find numerous allusions to him among the old accounts, receipts to workmen, the King's writs, &c., but we can derive no clear idea of what Chaucer was doing, or whether he was competent to do the work expected of him. In 1390, St. George's Chapel, Windsor, was said to be very ruinous and on the point of falling to the ground. Chaucer was appointed to repair it and also the banks of the Thames by Greenwich. Just a year after, we find the chapel described in the same words, and the King's writ to Chaucer 'not to interfere' with John Gedney, his successor as Clerk of the Works at Windsor; and consequently the dead stock and tools, &c., which were delivered by inventory to Chaucer in 1389, are handed over by Chaucer to Gedney. Perhaps Chaucer did not fulfil the work. At any rate we find allusions to 'jousts' in Smithfield in May 1390, for which Chaucer was employed in preparing scaffoldings, for the King and Queen to witness them. There were 'miracle plays' in Smithfield (says Stow) in 1391, similar to those played now at Ammergau, and played by the parish clerks of London; they continued for three days together, and all the nobles of the land were present. All this looks as though the Windsor works may have been neglected for the excitement of London. Chaucer first had to be checked by a comptroller of the King's works, who was paid 12*d.* a day; then he got leave to do the works by deputy: six months later he gives up his appointment, which he never seems to have enjoyed.

There is reason to believe that Chaucer wrote his *Knight's Tale* in 1387, and its latter part describing a brilliant tourney may have been inspired by the jousts of 1386, in which Henry, son of the Duke of Lancaster, 'bore him well,' which would have had special interest for Chaucer, his father's friend. The *Miller's Tale*, written with much the same vigour and enthusiasm, and making great fun out of a dapper parish clerk who 'played Herod on a stage high,' may, I think, be dated about this time (1391), and if so, we can understand Chaucer's anxiety to get away from dull Greenwich and Windsor when the Court was in London, and suspect he divided his time between the 'larks' in Smithfield and dazed absorption over his pen.

There is no doubt that, if Chaucer neglected these works, the world is the better for it: for overseeing bricklayers could be done by anyone not a poet; but not everyone could write the *Canterbury Tales* and the feats of knights, and the pranks of young clerks and 'yong wives.'

While he held this office (viz., September 1390) a misfortune befell him. Some notorious thieves attacked him, near the 'foule Ok' (foul Oak), and robbed him of 20*l.* (nearly 200*l.* present currency) of the King's money, his horse, and other movables. This was a mishap likely enough to overtake any traveller in those day of bad roads and lonely marshes, for there was no great protection by police or soldiery in ordinary cases. The King's writ, in which he forgives Chaucer this sum of 20*l.*, is still extant.

What he did, or how he lived, for some time after his retirement from the King's Works in 1391, is not known; but in 1393 he was still living at Greenwich, where he had work on hand three years before—poor, and asking Scogan to intercede for him 'where it would fructify'—that is, at Court—and jesting on their both being 'hoar and round of shape.' Chaucer was then about fifty-one. In 1394, King Richard granted him a pension of 20*l.* per annum for life. This was the year when the Duke of Lancaster married Katherine, Lady Swynford, who thus became 'the second lady in the kingdom'; but I fear Chaucer was still in great distress, for we hear of many small loans which he obtained on this new pension during the next four years, which betray too clearly his difficulties. In 1398, the King granted him writs to protect him against arrest—that is, forbidding the people to whom Chaucer owed money to put him in prison, which they would otherwise have done.

It is sad that during these latter years of his life, the great poet who had done so much, and lived so comfortably, should have grown so poor and harassed. He ought to have been provided for so that his great genius could unfold itself in new thoughts and fresh vigour. He had had large sums of money; his dead wife's sister, if our surmise be

correct, was Duchess of Lancaster[1]; his son[2] was holding grants and offices under the Duke of Lancaster, and he himself was constantly associated with persons of high position and influence. Perhaps he wasted his money.[3] But we cannot know exactly how it all came about at this distance of time. And one thing shows clearly how much courage and patience Chaucer had; for it was when he was in such want in 1388, two years after he had been turned out of the Customs, that he was busiest with the greatest work of his life, called the CANTERBURY TALES. Some men would have been too sad after such reverses to be able to write many stories; but I think Chaucer must have felt at peace in his mind.

CHAUCER'S LIFE WORK.

The *Canterbury Tales* are full of cheerfulness and fun; full of love for the beautiful world, and full of sympathy for all who are in trouble or misery. The beauty of Chaucer's character, and his deep piety, come out very clearly in these Tales, as I think you will see. No one could have sung the 'ditties and songs glad' about birds in the medlar trees, and the soft rain on the 'small sweet grass,' and the 'lily on her stalk green,' and the sweet winds that blow over the country, whose mind was clouded by sordid thoughts, and narrow, selfish aims. No one could have sung so blithely of 'fresh Emily,' and with such good-humoured lenity even of the vulgar, chattering 'Wife of Bath,' whose heart was full of angry feelings towards his fellow-creatures. And no one, who was not in his heart a religious man, could have breathed the words of patience with which Arcites tries to comfort his friend, in their gloomy prison—or the greater patience of poor persecuted Griselda—or the fervent love of truth and honourable dealing, and a good life, which fills so many of his poems—or a hundred other touching prayers and tender words of warning. There was a large-heartedness and liberality about Chaucer's mind, as of one who had mixed cheerfully with all classes

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[1] See note 1, p. 11.

[2] I have assumed that Thomas Chaucer was Geoffrey Chaucer's son, as there is no proof to the contrary, and a probability in point of dates that he was. See note 2, p. 13.

[3] Mr. Furnivall's ingenious suggestion that Chaucer's penury may possibly be due to his having dabbled in alchemy (an empirical branch of chemistry), is borne out by the technical knowledge displayed in the *Canon's Yeoman's Tale*, and in *Troilus* he compares falling tears to 'liquor out of alambic full fast' distilling.

We may add here—to defend our great man's character—that alchemy was believed in by many men of exceptional mental power. Roger Bacon, discoverer of gunpowder and the magnifying glass, is perhaps the greatest name among them; and vain as seemed much of their toil with crucibles and furnaces, alembics and aludels, we owe a great deal to the first meritorious alchemists, who really paved the way to modern chemistry.

There is no reason to suppose Chaucer had any vice likely to affect his pocket; but alchemy was the scientific mania of the day, and high and low were ready to risk fortune and health in pursuit of the philosopher's stone, the elixir of life, the way to manufacture gold. And, at the same time, there is no other sufficient reason for the extreme poverty which the poet had fallen into.

and saw good in all. His tastes were with the noble ranks among whom he had lived; but he had deep sympathy with the poor and oppressed, and could feel kindly even to the coarse and the wicked. He hated none but hypocrites; and he was never tired of praising piety and virtue.

Chaucer's writings probably supported him when he had no other means of subsistence; they were in fact the novels of the day, and his songs and roundels were doubtless sung in every household. Chaucer wrote a great many short poems, which I have not spoken of. Many have been lost or forgotten. Some may come back to us in the course of time and search. All we know of are well worth reading, with the rest of the *Canterbury Tales* not in this book: a few of these poems I have placed at the end of the volume; and among them one *To his Empty Purse*, written only the year before his death.

Chaucer's works have been divided into four periods: first, when he was young and wrote many imitations of French and other songs, also the *Death of Pity*, and the *Booke of the Duchesse*; second, 1373 to 1384, in which authorities include the *Second Nun's Tale*, the *Parliament of Fowls*, *Complaint of Mars*, *Annelida and Arcite*, the *House of Fame*, *Troilus and Cressida*, and a few small pieces; third (greatest period), when he wrote most of his *Canterbury Tales*, his *Good Counsel*, *Legend of Good Women*, and *Mother of God*; fourth period, called the decline, though I think without sufficient reason, during which he finished his *Canterbury Tales* as far as he lived to do it, wrote his *Treatise on the Astrolabe* for his son, the *Compleynt of Venus*, *Envoy to Scogan*, *Marriage*, *Gentleness*, *Balade to King Richard*, *Fortune*, and his last poem of all, *Compleynt to his Purse*, sent to Henry IV. I do not see why his powers should be regarded as in decline, since most men of sixty are hardly past prime, certainly not past good work, and Chaucer died at that age unfortunately, instead of living and writing up to seventy-five or eighty. It is possible that Chaucer's health may have been failing; but as he took the lease of a Westminster house in 1399 for 53 years, he could not himself have anticipated speedy death or felt too old to change his habits with his bettered fortunes.

There is only a little more I can tell you about Chaucer's life before we begin the stories. We got as far as 1398, when the King gave Chaucer letters of protection from his creditors.

About this time another grant of a tun of wine, a common form of annuity, was bestowed upon him, equal to about 5*l.* a year, or 50*l.* our money. Chaucer was still evidently a warm politician, now rather on the people's side than the Crown's, since the Crown was in fault, though he had not greatly sympathised with Wat Tyler's followers, whom he sneered at for their noise—as their ultimate failure left them open to sneers. His Balade sent to King Richard is dated by the best authorities in 1397–8. In it he appeals to Richard to be honourable, not extortionate,

steadfast in government, redressing wrong, and winning back his people's love. But Richard was no longer the frank brave boy who had soothed a furious army with a word, but weak and ill-tempered, led by bad companions and deaf to good counsel. He had just put to death his uncle, Duke of Gloucester, greatly ill-used the Dukes of Warwick and Arundel, and the Duke of Lancaster, shrewdest of the brothers, took care of himself by keeping quiet. Now the people turned to his son, Henry of Hereford, whom Richard had also despoiled and outlawed with ingratitude and treachery, and, unwilling as they had been to be ruled by John of Gaunt, they invited Henry to claim the throne while Richard was quelling riots in Ireland, and the once-beloved King was speedily deposed, and afterwards murdered in Pomfret Castle. Henry was a wiser and better man than Richard, and the people loved him. John of Gaunt did not live to see his son king, for he died when Henry was abroad; and it must have been a real grief to Chaucer, then a man of sixty,[1] when this old and faithful friend was taken from him.

Still it is pleasant to find that Henry of Lancaster shared his father's friendship for Chaucer. I dare say he had been rocked on Chaucer's knee when a little child, and had played with Chaucer's children. About this time Chaucer wrote his *Complaint to his Purse*, for he was in great want of money, addressing it to Henry IV. as 'Conqueror of Brutus' Albion.'

The new King had not been on the throne four days before he helped Chaucer. John of Gaunt himself could not have done it quicker. He granted him an annuity of 26*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* a year (equal to about 270*l.* now), in addition to the other 20*l.* granted by Richard.

The royal bounty was only just in time, for Chaucer did not long survive his old friend, the Duke of Lancaster. He died about a year after him, aged sixty, when Henry had been king thirteen months.

John of Gaunt was buried in St. Paul's, by the side of his first and best-loved wife, Blanche; Geoffrey Chaucer was buried in Westminster Abbey.

So ended the first, and almost the greatest, English writer, of whom no one has spoken an ill word, and who himself spoke no ill words.

Poet, soldier, statesman, and scholar, 'truly his better ne his pere, in school of my rules could I never find. . . . In goodness of gentle, manly speech he passeth all other makers.'[2]

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[1] Remembering the discussion raised as to the year of Chaucer's birth, coupled with the tradition of his venerable looks, we may suggest that in those days men were older at sixty than now. The average duration of life was lower, and the paucity of comforts probably told on appearance.

[2] Author of the *Testament of Love*.

Chaucer's Speech.

And now for Chaucer's 'speech.' How shall I show you its 'goodness,' since it is so difficult to read this old English? A very little trouble is necessary. Do not be afraid of the odd spelling, for you must remember that it is not so much that Chaucer spells differently from us, as that we have begun to spell differently from Chaucer. He would think our English quite as odd, and not half so pretty, as his own; for the old English, when spoken, sounded very pretty and stately, and not so much like a 'gabble' as ours, and he would think it much less reasonable, for spelling was phonetic in his day, that is, according to the pronunciation, whilst ours often defies pronunciation, derivation, and everything else.

I said a little while ago that our talking is much faster than talking was in Chaucer's time; it seems very curious that a language can be so changed in a few hundred years, without people really meaning to change it. But it has changed gradually. As we think faster, we speak faster. Little by little new words have come into use, and others have got 'old fashioned.' Even the English of *one* hundred years ago was very unlike our own. But the English of *five* hundred years ago was, of course, still more unlike.

Now, I have put two versions of Chaucer's poetry on the page, side by side. First, the lines as Chaucer made them, and then the same lines in English such as we speak. You can thus look at both, and compare them.

You ought to hear the verses in the two ways of pronouncing them, Chaucer's way and our way: but when you have grown a little used to the old-fashioned English, you will soon see how much more musical it sounds than our modern tongue. Besides, it is interesting to be able to see the words as Chaucer and his scrivener put them, so as to know exactly how he talked.

In Chaucer's time, as I have shown, a great deal of French was spoken in England, and it was mixed up with English more than it is now. The sound of old French and old English were something the same, both spoken very slowly, with a kind of drawl, as much as to say—'I am in no hurry. I have all day before me, and if you want to hear what I have got to say, you must wait till I get my words out.' The *a*'s and *e*'s pronounced as in French, the *e* at the end of words generally sounded, as in German now, if a consonant follows.

Note, then, that Chaucer is always rhythmical. Hardly ever is his rhythm a shade wrong: and therefore, roughly speaking, *if you pronounce the words so as to preserve the rhythm*, all will be well. When the final

e must be sounded in order to make the rhythm right, sound it, but when it is not needed leave it mute.

So, if we wish to hear Chaucer's stories, which are thoroughly worth hearing, we must let him tell them in his own way, and try and understand his quaint old language. And if we do not pronounce the words as he meant, we shall find the verses will sound quite rough—some lines being longer than others, and some not even rhyming, and altogether slovenly.

Chaucer himself was very anxious that people should read his words properly, and says in his verses, as if he were speaking to a human being—

GLOSSARY.

great diversity And for there is so gretë dyversité
tongue In Englissh,[1] and in writynge of our tongë,
pray So preye I God that non miswrité thee
defect Ne thee mys-meterë for defaute of tongë.—*Troilus.*

To *mis-metre* is to read the *metre* wrong; and the metre is the length of the line. If you read the length all wrong, it sounds very ugly.

Now, suppose those lines were read in modern English, they would run thus:—

And because there is so great a diversity
In English, and in writing our tongue,
So I pray God that none miswrite thee
Nor mismetre thee through defect of tongue.

How broken and ragged it all sounds! like a gown that is all ragged and loose, and doesn't fit. It becomes regular and musical if it is pronounced properly.

You will find that when Chaucer's words are rightly pronounced, remembering that a final *e* is usually a syllable, all his lines are of an even length and sound well. Chaucer had a fine ear for poetical rhythm, unlike his predecessors: and if a fault occurs in the metre, it is by error of the scrivener. Chaucer was the first English poet who apparently cared for smooth metre.[2]

When you find any very hard words in Chaucer's verses which you cannot understand, look in the glossary and the modern version beside them; and you will see what is the word for it nowadays. A few words which cannot be translated within the metre you will find at the bottom of the page. Many of the words are like French or German words: so if you have learnt these languages you will be able often to guess what the word means.

For instance, you know how, in French, when you wish to say, I *will not* go or I *am not* sure, two negatives are used, *ne* and *pas*: Je *n'*irai

[1] Alluding to the numerous dialects in use in England at the time.

[2] The teacher should here read to the child some lines with the proper pronunciation: see 'Forewords,' pp. xi., xii.

pas, or je *ne* suis *pas* sûr. Well, in Chaucer's time two negatives were used in English. He would have said, 'I *n'ill nat* go,' and 'I *n'am nat* sure.'

There are many lines where you will see two negatives. 'I n'am nat precious.' 'I ne told no deintee.' 'I wol not leve no tales.' 'I ne owe hem not a word.' 'There n'is no more to tell,' &c. Sometimes, however, *ne* is used by itself, without *not* or *nat* to follow. As 'it n'is good,' 'I not' (for 'I ne wot'), 'I n'ill say—or sain,' instead of 'it is not good—I know not—I will not say.'

And, as in this last word sain (which only means *say*), you will find often an *n* at the end of words, which makes it difficult to understand them; and this betokens their Anglo-Saxon root. But you will soon cease to think that a very alarming difficulty if you keep looking at the modern version. As, 'I shall nat *lien*' (this means *lie*). 'I wol nat *gon*' (*go*): '*withouten* doubt' (*without*). 'Ther wold I *don* hem no pleasance' (*do*); 'thou shalt *ben* quit' (*be*). 'I shall you *tellen*' (*tell*). There are many old English words which, though phonetically spelt, are absolutely German: as fele, many (German, *viel*); ferne, far (German, *ferne*); wonnen, to go (German, *wohnen*); hond, hand (German, *Hand*). There are old English words which are quite French: as *daunt*, control, from Fr. *dompter*; savour, to taste, from *savourer*; reddour, violence, from *redeur*; and many old words linger among the servant class and provincial people; as, to find=to provide (we still say 'all found' in servants' diet); the vulgar pronunciation of poor, *pore*, is good old English, which we unjustly cavil at; so is 'ketch,' for catch. The common 'Wo!' addressed to horses is an old word—*ho*, a cry to stop or slacken any action.

And I think you will also be able to see how much better some old words are for expressing the meaning than our words. For instance, how much nicer 'flittermouse' is than 'bat.' That is an old North-country word, and very German (*Fledermaus*). When you see a little bat flying about you know it is a bat because you have been told: but 'flittermouse' is better than bat, because it means 'floating mouse.' Now a bat *is* like a mouse, floating in the air. The word expresses the movement and the form of the creature.

Again—the old word 'herteles' (heartless), instead of without courage, how well it expresses the want of courage or spirit: we often say people have no heart for work, or no heart for singing, when they are sad, or ill, or weak. Heartless does not always mean cowardly; it means that the person is dejected, or tired, or out of spirits. We have left off using the word heartless in that sense, however, and we have no word to express it. When *we* say heartless we mean cruel or unkind, which is a perfectly different meaning. Such old words as 'wide-where,'

'anywhen,'[1] 'anywhy,'[1] 'somewhen,'[1] 'inwit'[1] (conscience), 'wanhope' (despair), 'grummet'[1] (cloud or sediment), 'doom' (judgment) and 'doomsman,' 'hurtle' (push down), 'misboding' (presentiment), 'heart-spoon' (centre of the chest), 'ding' (re-iterate), would be better revived in our language than many Latinisms which have come in, as though we had no real English words to use; especially when, as in some cases, there is *no* new word to replace the lost old one. We have no equivalent now for 'wide-where;' we use the cumbrous sentence 'in a large area' —nor for 'somewhen'—we must say 'at some time or other.'

One more instance. The word 'fret' was used for devouring. This just describes what we call 'nibbling' now. The moth fretting a garment—means the moth devouring or nibbling a garment. This is a word we have lost sight of now in the sense of *eating*; we only use it for 'complaining' or 'pining.' But a *fretted* sky—and the *frets* on a guitar—are from the old Saxon verb *frete*, to eat or devour, and describe a wrinkly uneven surface, like the part of a garment fretted by the moth; in the old sense it would be correct to say, 'She is fretted' or 'the trouble frets (devours or gnaws) her.' It is not correct to say 'she frets,' but we may say 'she frets herself,' i.e. worries or devours herself with grief. So you must not be impatient with the old words, which are sometimes much better for their purpose, more forcible, or more poetic, than the words we use nowadays.

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[1] Old words, which do not occur in Chaucer.

CANTERBURY TALES.

CHAUCER'S PILGRIMS.

SOME of Chaucer's best tales are not told by himself. They are put into the mouths of other people. In those days there were no newspapers—indeed there was not much news—so that when strangers who had little in common were thrown together, as they often were in inns, or in long journeys, they had few topics of conversation: and so they used to entertain each other by singing songs, or quite as often by telling their own adventures, or long stories such as Chaucer has written down and called the *Canterbury Tales.*

The reason he called them the *Canterbury Tales* was because they were supposed to be told by a number of travellers who met at an inn, and rode together on a pilgrimage to St. Thomas a Beket's shrine at Canterbury: this was not so much a solemn religious penance as a very pleasant picnic party. About four days were commonly occupied in the journey thither, which was broken at Dartford, Rochester, and Ospringe: for the Canterbury road in the fourteenth century was often heavy with 'slough,' which Chaucer repeatedly alludes to, and the equally heavy horses found ten or twelve miles a day ample, particularly as no one was in a hurry.

But I shall now let Chaucer tell you about his interesting company in his own way, and it must be remembered that probably every character in it, as would be consistent with the fashion of the day, was a recognisable portrait.

He begins with a beautiful description of the spring—about the 17th of April, the time usually chosen for long journeys, or for any new undertaking, in those days.

When we go out into the gardens or the fields, and see the fresh green of the hedges and the white may-blossoms and the blue sky, we may well think of Chaucer and his Canterbury Pilgrims!

CHAUCER'S PROLOGUE.

GLOSSARY.

When,	WHAN that Aprille with his schowres swoote	When April hath his sweetest showers brought
sweet	The drought of Marche hath perced to the roote,	To pierce the heart of March and banish drought,
root	And bathed every veyne in swich licour,	Then every vein is bathéd by his power,
such	Of which vertue engendred is the flour;	With fruitful juice engendering the flower;
liquor	Whan Zephirus[1] eek with his swete breethe	When the light zephyr, with its scented breath,
flower	Enspired hath in every holte and heethe	Stirs to new life in every holt and heath
also,	The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne	The tender crops, what time the youthful sun
breath	Hath in the Ram his halfe cours i-ronne,	Hath in the Ram his course but half-way run;
inspired, grove	And smale fowles maken melodie,	And when the little birds make melody,
young,	That slepen al the night with open eye,	That sleep the whole night long with open eye,
sun	So priketh hem nature in here corages:—	So Nature rouses instinct into song,—
run	Thanne longen folk to gon on pilgrimages,	Then folk to go as pilgrims greatly long,
small birds make sleep,	And palmers[2] for to seeken straunge strondes,	And palmers hasten forth to foreign strands
pricketh them, their impulses	To ferne halwes, kouthe[3] in sondry londes;	To worship far-off saints in sundry lands;
long, go	And specially, from every schires ende	And specially, from every shire's end
seek,	Of Engelond, to Caunterbury they wende,	Of England, unto Canterbury they wend,
shores	The holy blisful martir[4] for to seeke,	Before the blessed martyr there to kneel,
distant (Germ. *ferne*) saints	That hem hath holpen whan that they were seeke.	Who oft hath help'd them by his power to heal.
county		
go		
blessed, seek		
them		
sick		

[1] *Zephyrus*, or Zephyr: the god of the west wind. It is become a name for the wind of summer.

[2] Pilgrims who have brought a palm branch from the Holy Land.

[3] *Kouthe*: known of, past participle of the verb conne, to know, or to be able. It was used much as *savoir* is in French—to be able to do, to know how to do a thing. The verse means, 'To serve the saints they *could*, or they knew of, or knew how to serve.'

[4] Thomas Beket, Chancellor of Henry II. He was Archbishop of Canterbury for eight years, and was murdered by servants of the King in 1170. He was canonized, or made a saint, by the Pope, after his death, and pilgrimages were then constantly made

It happened that one day in the spring, as I was resting at the Tabard[1] Inn, in Southwark, ready to go on my devout pilgrimage to Canterbury, there arrived towards night at the inn a large company of all sorts of people—nine-and-twenty of them: they had met by chance, all being pilgrims to Canterbury.[2] The chambers and the stables were roomy, and so every one found a place. And shortly, after sunset, I had made friends with them all, and soon became one of their party. We all agreed to rise up early, to pursue our journey together.[3]

But still, while I have time and space, I think I had better tell you who these people were, their condition and rank, which was which, and what they looked like. I will begin, then, with

THE KNIGHT.

GLOSSARY.		
there.	A KNIGHT[4] ther was and that a	A knight there was, and that a worthy
valuable	worthy man,	man,
	That from the tyme that he ferst bigan	Who from the time in which he first began
ride	To ryden out, he lovede chyvalrye,	To ride afield, loved well all chivalry,
frankness	Trouthe and honour, fredom and curtesie.	Honour and frankness, truth and courtesy.
war	Ful worthi was he in his lordes werre,	Most worthy was he in his master's war,
	And therto hadde he riden, noman	And thereto had he ridden, none more
further	ferre,	far,
	As wel in Cristendom as in hethenesse,	As well in Christian as in heathen lands,
ever	And evere honoured for his worthinesse.	And borne with honour many high commands.

to his tomb in Canterbury Cathedral. In those days it was usual in sickness or peril to vow a pilgrimage to the shrine of some saint who was supposed to be able to help people by interceding with God, when pilgrims prayed him to. Erasmus alludes to the quantities of offerings on Thomas Beket's shrine, given by those who believed the saint had healed or helped them.

[1] A tabard was an outer coat without sleeves, worn by various classes, but best known as the coat worn over the armour, whereon there were signs and figures embroidered, by which to recognise a man in war or tournament: for the face was hidden by the helmet, and it was easier to detect a pattern in bright colours than engraved in dark steel. So, of course, the pattern represented the arms used by him. And thus the tabard got to be called the *coat of arms*. Old families still possess what they call their coat of arms, representing the device chosen by their ancestors in the lists; but they do not wear it any more: it is only a copy of the pattern on paper. A *crest* was also fastened to the helmet for the same purpose of recognition, and there is usually a 'crest' still surmounting the modern 'coat of arms.' The inn where Chaucer slept was simply named after the popular garment. It, or at least a very ancient inn on its site, was recently standing, and known as the Talbot Inn, High Street, Borough: Talbot being an evident corruption of Tabard. We may notice here that the Ploughman, described later on, wears a tabard, which may have been a kind of blouse or smock-frock, but was probably similar in form to the knight's tabard.

[2] People were glad to travel in parties for purposes of safety, the roads were so bad and robbers so numerous.

[3] Probably all or many occupied but one bedroom, and they became acquainted on retiring to rest, at the ordinary time—sunset.

[4] The word Knight (Knecht) really means *servant*. The ancient knights attended on the higher nobles, and were their *servants*, fighting under them in battle. For as there was no regular army, when a war broke out everybody who could bear arms engaged himself to fight under some king or lord, anywhere, abroad or in England, and was paid for his services. That was how hundreds of nobly born men got their living—the only way they could get it: and

He had been at Alexandria when it was won: in Prussia [1] he had gained great honours, and in many other lands. He had been in fifteen mortal battles, and had fought in the lists for our faith three times, and always slain his foe. He had served in Turkey and in the Great Sea.[2] And he was always very well paid too. Yet, though so great a soldier, he was wise in council; and in manner he was gentle as a woman. Never did he use bad words in all his life, to any class of men: in fact

GLOSSARY.

perfect, gentle	He was a verray perfight, gentil knight.	He was a very perfect, noble knight.

As for his appearance, his horse was good, but not gay. He wore a gipon of fustian, all stained by his habergeon; [3] for he had only just arrived home from a long voyage.

THE SQUIRE.

there, son	With him ther was his sone, a yong SQUYER,	With him there was his son, a gay young squire,
lover merry	A lovyer, and a lusty bacheler,[4]	A bachelor and full of boyish fire,
locks curled	With lokkes crulle as they were leyd in presse.	With locks all curl'd as though laid in a press,
guess	Of twenty yeer he was of age I gesse.	And about twenty years of age, I guess.
wonderfully nimble, great	Of his stature he was of evene lengthe, And wondurly delyvere, and gret of strengthe.	In stature he was of an even length, And wonderfully nimble, and great of strength.
had been	And he hadde ben somtyme in chivachie,[5]	And he had followed knightly deeds of war
	In Flaundres, in Artoys, and in Picardie,	In Picardy, in Flanders, and Artois,
little	And born him wel, as of so litel space,	And nobly borne himself in that brief space,
stand	In hope to stonden in his lady grace.[6]	In ardent hope to win his lady's grace.
	Embrowded[7] was he, as it were a mede	Embroidered was he, as a meadow bright,

that is what the knight Arviragus does in the *Franklin's Tale*; leaving his bride, to win honour (and money) by fighting wherever he could.

The *squire* waited on the knight much as the knight did on the earl—much in the position of an aide-de-camp of the present day. The *page* served earl, knights, ladies. But knight, squire, and page were all honourable titles, and borne by noblemen's sons. The page was often quite a boy, and when he grew older changed his duties for those of squire, till he was permitted to enter the knighthood. The present knight is described as being in a lord's service, and fighting under him 'in his war,' but he was a man held in the highest honour.

[1] With the knights of the Teutonic order, who were always warring with their heathen neighbours.

[2] Part of the Mediterranean, along the coast of Palestine.

[3] The hauberk, or habergeon, was a mail-coat, worn over the gipon, a kind of jerkin made of leather, or, as here, fustian.

[4] 'On nommait *Bacheliers* les chevaliers pauvres, les *bas Chevaliers* . . . quand ceux-ci avaient reçu la chevalerie, on les appelait Chevaliers-Bacheliers . . . quant à l'Ecuyer (Squire) c'était le prétendant à la Chevalerie.'—LE GRAND, *Fabliaux et Contes.*

[5] *Chivachie*: military expeditions.

[6] This youth, whose expeditions and habit of flute-playing are specially noted, is probably the portrait of some well-known gentleman's son.

[7] Mr. Bell considers that these two lines refer to the Squire's complexion of red and white. Speght thinks it means freckled. But there is little doubt that the material of his dress is what Chaucer means, for there is no other instance of Chaucer calling a complexion *embroidered*, and gorgeously flowered fabrics embroidered with the needle were peculiar to the period, and in common use.

GLOSSARY.		
	Al ful of fresshe floures, white and reede.	All full of freshest flowers, red and white;
playing on the flute	Syngynge he was, or floytynge al the day;	Singing he was, or flute-playing all day,
	He was as fressh as is the moneth of May.	He was as fresh as is the month of May.
	Schort was his goune, with sleeves long and wyde.	Short was his gown, his sleeves were long and wide,
could, horse	Wel cowde he sitte on hors, and faire ryde.	Well be became his horse, and well could ride;
relate	He cowde songes make and wel endite,	He could make songs, and ballads, and recite,
also, draw pictures	Juste and eek daunce, and wel purtreye and write.	Joust and make pretty pictures, dance, and write.

As for the young squire's manners—

	Curteys he was, lowly, and servysable,	Courteous he was, lowly, and serviceable,
carved	And carf[1] byforn his fadur at the table.	And carved before his father at the table.

THE YEOMAN.

no more	A YEMAN had he, and servauntz nomoo	A yeoman had he (but no suite beside:
it pleased him, so	At that tyme, for him luste ryde soo;	Without attendants thus he chose to ride,)
	And he was clad in coote and hood of grene.	And he was clad in coat and hood of green.
arrows	A shef of pocok arwes[2] bright and kene,	A sheaf of peacock-arrows bright and keen,
bore	Under his belte he bar ful thriftily,	Under his belt he carried thriftily;
	Wel cowde he dresse his takel yemanly;	Well could he dress his tackle yeomanly!
arrows drooped not	His arwes drowpede nought with fetheres lowe,[3]	None of his arrows drooped with feathers low,
bore	And in his hond he bar a mighty bowe.	And in his hand he held a mighty bow.
face (Fr. *visage*)	A not-heed[4] hadde he, with a broun visage.	A knot-head had he, and a sunburnt hue,
knew	Of woode-craft cowde he wel al the usage;	In woodcraft all the usages he knew;
bore	Upon his arme he bar a gay bracèr,[5]	Upon his arm a bracer gay he wore,
buckler	And by his side a swerd, and a bokeler,[6]	And by his side buckler and sword he bore,

[1] As it was the custom for sons to do.

[2] Peacocks' feathers on them instead of swans'.

[3] It was a sign of the yeoman's carefulness in his business that they stuck out from the shaft instead of drooping

[4] Knot-head: the tippet or tail of the hood was knotted round his head, for convenience.

[5] *Bracer*: a leathern defence for the arm: a similar shield is now worn in archery.

[6] *Bokeler*—buckler: a small round shield—used chiefly for a warder to catch the blow of an adversary. Some pictures show the buckler to have been only the size of a plate, but it varied. In comparing the Wife of Bath's hat to a buckler, Chaucer could not have meant so small a one. It was usual for serving men of noble families to carry swords and bucklers when in attendance on them.

Glossary.		
	And on that other side a gay daggere.	While opposite a dagger dangled free;
dressed well	Harneysed wel, and scharp as poynt of spere;	Polished and smart, no spear could sharper be.
ornament representing St. Christopher, shone	A Cristofre on his brest of silver schene.	A silver 'Christopher' on his breast was seen,
bore	An horn he bar, the bawdrik[1] was of grene:	A horn he carried by a baldrick green:
forester, truly	A forster was he sothly, as I gesse.	He was a thorough forester, I guess.

THE PRIORESS.

	Ther was also a Nonne, a Prioresse,	There also was a Nun, a Prioress,
her	That of hire smylyng was ful symple and coy;	Who of her smiling was most simple and coy;
oath	Hire gretteste ooth[2] ne was but by seynt Loy,	Her greatest oath was only 'by St. Loy,'
called	And sche was cleped madame Eglentyne.	And she was calléd Madame Eglantine.
	Ful wel sche sang the servisë divyne,	Full well she sang the services divine.
seemly	Entuned in hire nose[3] ful semely,	Entunéd through her nose melodiously,
elegantly	And Frensch sche spak ful faire and fetysly,	And French she spoke fairly and fluently,
school	After the scole of Stratford atte Bowe,	After the school of Stratford atte Bow,
her unknown	For Frensch of Parys was to hire unknowe.	For French of Paris—*that* she did not know.
meat, taught	At mete wel i-taught was sche withalle;	At meal-times she was very apt withal;
let	Sche leet no morsel from hire lippes falle,	No morsel from her lips did she let fall,
wetted	Ne wette hire fyngres in hire sauce deepe.[4]	Nor in her sauce did wet her fingers deep;
carry	Wel cowde sche carie a morsel, and wel keepe,	Well could she lift a titbit, and well keep,
fell	That no drope ne fille uppon hire breste.	That not a drop should fall upon her breast;
courtesy, pleasure	In curteisie was set ful moche hire leste.	To cultivate refinement was her taste.
	Hire overlippe wypede sche so clene,[5]	Her upper lip she ever wiped so clean
scrap	That in hire cuppe was no ferthing sene	That in her drinking-cup no scrap was seen

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[1] *Bawdrik*—baldrick: ornamented strap to suspend the horn or dagger.

[2] Oaths were only too common among ladies as well as men. It was an exceptional refinement to use only a small oath. Tyrwhitt erroneously prints the name of the saint, Eloy, contraction of Eligius, a saint who, having been a worker in metals, was often invoked by smiths, &c. St. Loy is the old spelling of St. Louis of France, by whom the Prioress swore. She is probably a well-known personage; these Prioresses were the 'finishing governesses' of fashionable young ladies: hence her showy habits and efforts to practise Court manners.

[3] Bell approves reading *voice* for nose, as Speght has actually done. It has not struck either of them that Chaucer is all the way through laughing at the fastidious and rather over-attractive nun!

[4] Knives and forks were not in use—people had to use their fingers; but some used them more agreeably than others.

[5] At meals one cup for drinking passed from guest to guest, instead of each having his own glass, as now. It was considered polite to wipe one's mouth well before drinking, so that the next drinker should find no grease in the wine. The great stress Chaucer lays on the pretty nun's courtesy seems to hint at very dirty habits among ordinary folk at meals!

GLOSSARY.		
	Of greece, whan sche dronken hadde	Of grease, when she had drank as she
had drunk	hire draughte.	thought good,
seemly	Ful semely after hire mete sche raughte.	And gracefully she reach'd forth for her food.
	And sikerly sche was of gret disport,	And she was very playful, certainly,
assuredly	And ful plesaunt, and amyable of port,	And pleasant, and most amiable to see.
ways	And peyned hire to countrefete cheere	And mighty pains she took to counterfeit
stately, manner	Of court, and ben estatlich of manere,	Court manners, and be stately and discreet,
worthy	And to ben holden digne of reverence.	And to be held as worthy reverence.
speak	But for to speken of hire conscience,	But then to tell you of her conscience!
	Sche was so charitable and so pitous[1]	She was so charitable and piteous
	Sche wolde weepe if that sche sawe a mous	That she would weep did she but see a mouse
	Caught in a trappe, if it were deed or bledde.	Caught in a trap, if it were dead or bled;
small hounds	Of smale houndes hadde sche, that sche fedde	And little dogs she had, which oft she fed
	With rosted flessh, or mylk, and wastel breed.[2]	With roasted meat, and milk, and finest bread;
them	But sore wepte sche if oon of hem were deed,	But sore she wept if one of them were dead,
rod	Or if men smot it with a yerde smerte:	Or, haply, with a rod were smitten smart.
	And al was conscience and tendre herte.	And all was conscience and tender heart!
	Ful semely hire wymple[3] i-pynched was:	Most daintily her wimple plaited was:
well-proportioned, eyes, glass	Hire nose tretys: hire eyen greye as glas:	Her nose was straight; her eyes were grey as glass;
	Hire mouth ful smal, and therto softe and reed;	Her mouth was little, and so soft and red!
surely	But sikerly sche hadde a faire forheed.	Besides, she had a very fine forehead,
broad, think	It was almost a spanne brood, I trowe:	That measured nigh a span across, I trow!
certainly, undergrown	For hardily sche was not undurgrowe.	For certainly her stature was not low.
neat	Ful fetys was hire cloke, as I was	And very dainty was the cloak she
aware	waar.	wore;
small	Of smal coral aboute hire arme sche	Around her arm a rosary she bore,
bare	baar	

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[1] Mr. Bell naïvely points out the innocence and 'ignorance of the ways of the world,' which pervade the whole of the 'simple Prioress's character;' but you will notice that in laughing at the cheerful nun's affectation of court manners, Chaucer never once gives her credit for very high or noble character, though he does not speak ill-naturedly. I have ere now alluded to his dislike of the Church, friars, nuns, and all included: and here he shows that her charitableness and compassion were spent on wholly inadequate objects. She is extravagant to the last degree in feeding her dogs, and weeping for dead mice; but nothing is said of charity to the poor, or any good works at all. She is too intent on fascinating everybody, and dressing smartly. There is sharp sarcasm in all this.

[2] *Wastel breed*—a kind of cake—the most expensive of all bread.

[3] *Wimple:* a loose covering for the neck, close up to the chin, plaited daintily; worn especially by nuns.

Glossary.		
set of beads	A peire of bedes[1] gauded al with grene;	Of coral small, with little gauds of green,
jewel, bright (Ger. *schön*)	And theron heng a broch of gold ful schene,	And thereon hung a golden locket sheen,
written	On which was first i-write a crowned A,	On which was graven first a crownéd A,
	And after, *Amor vincit omnia.*[2]	And after, *Amor vincit omnia.*

The Prioress was attended by another nun, who acted as her chaplain, and three priests.

THE MONK.

mastery	A Monk ther was, a fair for the maistrie,[3]	A monk there was—one safe to rise no doubt,
hunting	An out-rydere, that lovede venerye;	A hunter, and devoted rider out;
be	A manly man, to ben an abbot able.	Manly—to be an abbot fit and able,
dainty horse	Ful many a deynté hors hadde he in stable:	For many a dainty horse had he in stable;
when	And whan he rood, men might his	And when he rode, his bridle you
hear	bridel heere[4]	could hear
jingling, clear	Gynglen in a whistlyng wynd as cleere,	Jingle along a whistling wind as clear
also	And eek as lowde as doth the chapel belle,	And quite as loud, as doth the chapel bell,
where, religious house	Ther as this lord was kepere of the selle.	Where this good monk is keeper of the cell.

This jolly monk cared for little else but hunting, though this has never been considered a proper pursuit for the clergy. He was indifferent to what was said of him, and spared no cost to keep the most splendid greyhounds and horses for hard riding and hare-hunting. I saw his sleeves edged with the rare fur *gris* at the wrist, and that the finest in the land; his hood was fastened under his chin with a curious gold pin, which had a love-knot in the largest end. His pate was bald and shiny, his eyes rolled in his head; his favourite roast dish was a fat swan.[5]

THE FRIAR.

friar, wanton	A Frere ther was, a wantoun and a merye,	A friar there was, so frisky and so merry—
solemn	A lymytour,[6] a ful solempne man.	A limitour, a most important man,

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[1] A rosary, the coral beads of which were divided by smaller ones, or gauds, of a green colour.

[2] 'Love conquers all things.' The Prioress might have twisted this device to refer to the text, 'The greatest of these is charity;' but the *double entendre* is apparent.

[3] From a French phrase, *bone pur la maistrie* = good to excel all others. The monk bids fair to excel all others or outstrip the rest in promotion, on account of his worldliness.

[4] 'The custom of hanging small bells on the bridle and harness of horses is still observed on the Continent for the purpose of giving notice to foot-passengers to get out of the way; but it was no doubt often used for ostentation. So Wiclif inveighs against the clergy in his Triologe for their "fair hors, and jolly and gay sadels, and bridels ringing by the way."'

[5] A bird more commonly eaten in those days than it is now, but expensive even then.

[6] *Lymytour:* a friar licensed to beg within a certain district or limit. This friar, no very pleasing character, is described as making such a good thing out of his begging, that he bribed his fellow friars not

GLOSSARY.

is able to do, knows, or can do	In alle the ordres foure[1] is noon that can	In the four orders there is none that can
dalliance, language	So moche of daliaunce and fair langage.	Outdo him in smooth talk and playfulness.
	. . . .	. . . .
familiar	Ful wel biloved and famulier was he	He was most intimate and popular
everywhere, country	With frankeleyns[2] overal in his cuntrè,	With all the franklins dwelling near and far,
also, rich	And eek with worthi wommen of the toun:	And with the wealthy women of the town.
	. . . .	. . . .
	Ful sweetely herde he confessiòun,	So sweetly did he hear confession ay;
	And plesaunt was his absoluciòun;[3]	In absolution pleasant was his way.
easy	He was an esy man to yeve penàunce	In giving penance, very kind was he
when, knew	Ther as he wiste han a good pitàunce;	When people made it worth his while to be;
poor, give	For unto a poure ordre for to yive	For giving largely to some order poor
sign, shriven	Is signe that a man is wel i-schrive.	Shows that a man is free from sin, be sure,
boast	For if he yaf, he dorste make avaunt,	And if a man begrudged him not his dole,
knew	He wiste that a man was repentaunt.	He knew he was repentant in his soul.
heart	For many a man so hard is of his herte,	For many a man so hard of heart we see,
he may smart	He may not wepe although him sore smerte;	He cannot weep, however sad he be;
	Therfore in-stede of wepyng and prayeres,	Therefore, instead of weeping and long prayers,
may	Men moot yive silver to the poure freres.	Men can give money unto the poor friars.

He carried a number of pretty pins and knives about him that he made presents of to people; and he could sing well, and play on the rotta.[4] He never mingled with poor, ragged, sick people—it is not respectable to have anything to do with such,—but only with rich people who could give good dinners.

affectation	Somwhat he lipsede for his wantownesse,	Somewhat he lispéd for his wantonness,
tongue	To make his Englissch swete upon his tunge;	To make his English sweet upon his tongue;

and when he played and sang, his eyes twinkled like the stars on a frosty night.

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to come within his particular haunt, and interfere with his doings: an unprincipled dandy, who is another instance of Chaucer's sarcasm against the Church.

[1] There were four orders of mendicant friars—Dominicans, Franciscans, Carmelites, and Augustins.

[2] *Frankelyns*: a franklin was a rich landholder, free of feudal service, holding possessions immediately from the king.

[3] Confession, absolution, and penance, sacraments in the Roman Catholic Church.

[4] The rotta was an ancient instrument of the guitar tribe.

THE MERCHANT.

GLOSSARY.

	A MARCHAUNT was ther with a forked berd,	A merchant was there with a forkéd beard,
beard motley, horse	In motteleye,[1] and highe on hors he sat,	In motley dress'd—high on his horse he sat,
Flemish beaver	Uppon his heed a Flaundrisch bevere hat.	And on his head a Flemish beaver hat.

THE CLERK.

Oxford	A CLERK[2] there was of Oxenford also,	A clerk of Oxford was amid the throng,
logic, gone	That unto logik hadde longe i-go.	Who had applied his heart to learning long.
lean, horse	As lene was his hors as is a rake,	His horse, it was as skinny as a rake.
	And he was not right fat, I undertake;	And *he* was not too fat, I'll undertake!
looked hollow	But lokede holwe, and therto soberly.	But had a sober, rather hollow look;
uppermost short cloak	Ful thredbare was his overest courtepy.	And very threadbare was his outer cloak.
got	For he hadde geten him yit no benefice,	For he as yet no benefice had got:
	Ne was so worldly for to have office.	Worldly enough for office he was not!
he would	For him was levere have at his beddes heede	For liefer would he have at his bed's head
	Twenty bookes, clad in blak or reede,	A score of books, all bound in black or red,
	Of Aristotle, and his philosophie,	Of Aristotle, and his philosophy,
robes	Then robes riche, or fithele, or sawtrie.	Than rich attire, fiddle, or psaltery.

Yet, although the poor scholar was so wise and diligent, he had hardly any money, but all he could get from his friends he spent on books and on learning; and often he prayed for those who gave him the means to study. He spoke little—never more than he was obliged—but what he did speak was always sensible and wise.

tending to	Sownynge in moral vertu was his speche,	Full of true worth and goodness was his speech,
would, learn	And gladly wolde he lerne, and gladly teche.	And gladly would he learn, and gladly teach.

Then there was a

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[1] Motley, or dresses of two colours, were so popular that they became common—later on they were the badge of the lower orders, or clowns, and later still of the Fools, who were drawn from the lower orders. The institution of Fools was based on the silly and vulgar habit of making fun of ignorant or afflicted persons, though in time it was found 'to take a wise man to make a good fool.' Our 'clown' is the last relic.

[2] *Clerk:* a scholar probably preparing for the priesthood. In many Roman Catholic countries it was the custom till very lately for poor scholars to ask and receive contributions from the people for the expenses of their education. They were often extremely indigent, coming from the labouring classes. The parson, for instance, spoken of later, is said to be brother of the ploughman travelling with him. The poor scholar and the good parson are 'birds of a feather.'

SERJEANT-OF-LAW.

GLOSSARY.		
was not, abbr. ne was	Nowher so besy a man as he ther nas,	Nowhere there was a busier man than he,
	And yit he seemede besier than he was.	Yet busier than he was, he seemed to be.
	. . . .	. . . .
mixed fabric	He roode but hoomly in a medlé coote	He rode but homely-clad, in medley coat,
belt	Gird with a seynt of silk, with barres smale.	Girt with a belt of silk, with little bars.

THE FRANKLIN.

	A FRANKELEIN was in his compainye;	There was a Franklin in his company,
daisy	Whit was his berde, as is the dayesye.	And white his beard was, as the daisies be.
	Of his complexioun he was sangwyn,	In his complexion he was sanguine;
morning	Wel lovede he by the morwe a sop in wyn.	Well loved he in the morn a sop of wine.
	. . . .	. . . .
baked meats (pies)	Withoute bake mete was nevere his hous,	Without good meat, well cooked, was ne'er his house,
	Of flessch and fissch, and that so plentevous	Both fish and flesh, and that so plenteous,
It snowed	Hit snewede[1] in his hous of mete and drynke,	It seemed as though it snowed with meat and drink,
could think of	Of alle deyntees that men cowde thynke.	And every dainty that a man could think.
sundry	After the sondry sesouns of the yeer	According to the seasons of the year
supper	So chaungede he his mete and his soper.	He changed his meats and varied his good cheer.
	. . . .	. . . .
	His table dormant[2] in his halle alway	His table-dormant in his hall alway
	Stood redy covered al the longe day.	Stood ready furnished forth throughout the day.

He was the most hospitable of men, and very well-to-do. He kept open house, for everybody to come and eat when they liked. He had often been sheriff and knight of the shire;[3] for he was very highly thought of.

all	An anlas and a gipser al of silk	A dagger and a hawking-pouch of silk
	Heng at his gerdel, whit as morne mylk.	Hung at his girdle, white as morning milk.

A Haberdasher, a Carpenter, a Webber, a Dyer, and a Tapiser came next, with the Cook they brought with them, a Shipman 'with hew al broune,' a Doctor of Physic, well-to-do, but of a saving turn—'he kepte that he wan in pesti-

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[1] Or, *abounded*: the O. E. *snewe*, like the Prov. Eng. *snee, snie, snive, snew*, signifies *to swarm*.

[2] The table dormant was a permanent table, not a board on trestles such as the ordinary one. It was only used by very rich people, for it was a new fashion, and expensive.

[3] Knight of the shire, or M.P. Chaucer was knight of the shire for Kent in 1386.

lence'—and a 'worthy woman,' called the Wife of Bath, because she lived near that city.

THE WIFE OF BATH.[1]

She was so expert in weaving cloth, that there was no one who could come up to her; and she thought so much of herself, that if another woman even went up to the church altar before her, she considered it a slight upon her. The Wife of Bath was middle-aged, and somewhat deaf: she had had five husbands, but they had all died—she was such a shrew: and she had taken pilgrimages to Cologne and Rome, and many other places; for she had plenty of money, as one might see by her showy dress.

GLOSSARY.

hose	Hire hosen weren of fyn scarlet reed,	Her stockings were of finest scarlet red,
	Ful streyte yteyd, and schoos ful moyst and newe.	All straitly tied, and shoes all moist and new.
	Bold was hire face, and fair, and rede of hew.	Bold was her face, and fair, and red of hue.

She was well wimpled with fine kerchiefs, and her hat was as broad as a buckler or a target.

THE PARSON.

Then came the poor Parson—poor in condition, but 'rich in holy thought and work'—who was so good, and staunch, and true, so tender to sinners and severe to sin, regarding no ranks or state, but always at his post, an example to men.

wide	Wyd was his parisch, and houses fer asonder,	Wide was his parish, the houses far asunder,
left (ceased) not	But he ne lafte not for reyne ne thonder,	But never did he fail, for rain or thunder,
mischief	In siknesse nor in meschief to visite	In sickness and in woe to visit all
furthest, much and little	The ferrest in his parissche, moche and lite,	Who needed—far or near, and great and small—
	Uppon his feet, and in his hond a staf.	On foot, and having in his hand a staff.
	. . . .	. . . .
knowledge	But Cristes lore and his apostles twelve	Christ's and the twelve apostles' law he taught,
followed	He taughte and ferst he folwede it himselve.[2]	But first himself obey'd it, as he ought.

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[1] Possibly the Wives of Bath were eminent for skill, insolence, and free living. The neighbourhood of Bath was noted for cloth-making.

[2] Chaucer speaks, you see, in very different terms of the poor and conscientious parish priest (who was supported only by his benefice and tithes of the people—a small income) from what he does of the monastic orders, corrupted by the wealth they had accumulated. He was probably a Wicliffite, as mine host says he 'smells a Lollard in the wind' when the Parson checks his bad language. Bell says: 'It was quite natural that Chaucer, the friend of John of Gaunt, should praise the parochial clergy, who were poor, and therefore not formidable, at the expense of the rich monastic orders who formed the only barriers which then existed against the despotic power of the aristocracy.' But, however that may be, there is no doubt that these parish parsons actually were a much better and more honest class of men than the monks, and the begging friars,

THE PLOUGHMAN.

Then the parson's brother, who was only a Ploughman, and worked hard in the fields, kind to his neighbours, ever honest, loving God above all things. He wore a tabard, and rode on a mare.[1]

There was also a Reeve, 'a slender choleric man' from Norfolk:[2] a Miller, a Summoner, a Pardoner, a Manciple,[3] and myself [Chaucer].

THE SUMMONER.

The Summoner[4] was a terrible-looking person, and rode with the Pardoner, who was his friend: the Pardoner singing a lively song, and the Summoner growling out a bass to it, with a loud, harsh voice. As for his looks, he had

GLOSSARY.		
	A fyr-reed cherubynes face,[5]	A 'fiery-cherubin' red face,
pimply	For sawceflem he was with eyghen narwe.	For pimply he was, with narrow eyes.

Children were sore afraid of him when they saw him, he was so repulsive, and so cruel in extorting his gains. He was a very bad man: for though it was his duty to call up before the Archdeacon's court anybody whom he found doing wrong, yet he would let the wickedest people off, if they bribed him with money; and many poor people who did nothing wrong he forced to give him their hard earnings, threatening else to report them falsely to the Archdeacon. He carried a large cake with him for a buckler, and wore a garland big enough for the sign-post of an inn.[6]

THE PARDONER.

The Pardoner[7] was a great cheat too, and so the friends were well matched; he had long thin hair, as yellow as wax, that hung in shreds on his shoulders. He wore no hood, but kept it in his wallet: he thought himself quite in the tip-top of fashion.

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and all the rest, were at this time. They were drawn, like the Roman Catholic secular clergy of the present day, from the labouring classes. Chaucer tells us that the ploughman was the parson's brother. Amongst these parsons Wiclif found most followers, and we know that Chaucer sympathised with the Duke of Lancaster's patronage of Wiclif. It has been surmised that the parson is the great reformer himself.

[1] No one of good position rode on a mare in the middle ages. This good and honest ploughman may, not improbably, have suggested to Langland his main figure in his *Vision of Piers Plowman*.

[2] A steward or bailiff.

[3] An officer whose duty it is to purchase victuals for an inn of court, or a college.

[4] *Summoner:* an officer employed by the ecclesiastical courts to summon any persons who broke the law to appear before the archdeacon, who imposed what penalty he thought fit. The Summoners found it to their interest to accept bribes not to report offences: therefore bad people who could afford to pay got off, whilst those who could not afford to pay were punished with rigour. Many Summoners extorted bribes by threatening to say people had transgressed the law who had *not;* and so they got to be detested by the masses, and Chaucer's hideous picture gives the popular notion of a Summoner.

[5] A face as red as the fiery cherubin: a rather profane simile! In many ancient pictures we find the cherubin painted wholly scarlet; and the term had become a proverb. 'Sawceflem' is from *salsum flegma*, a disease of the skin.

[6] See note [1], p. 162.

[7] *Pardoner:* Seller of the Pope's indulgences.

Glossary.		
except	Dischevele, sauf his cappe, he rood al bare.	Dishevell'd, save his cap, he rode bare-head:
such, eyes	Suche glaryng eyghen hadde he, as an hare.	Such glaring eyes, like to a hare, he had!
	A vernicle[1] hadde he sowed on his cappe;	A vernicle was sewed upon his cap;
before	His walet lay byforn him in his lappe.	His wallet lay before him, in his lap.
	. . . . .	. . . . .
truly	But trewely to tellen atte laste,	But honestly to tell the truth at last,
	He was in churche a noble ecclesiaste.	He was in church a noble ecclesiast.
	Well cowde he rede a lessoun or a storye,[2]	Well could he read a lesson or a story,
best of all	But altherbest he sang an offertorie:	But ever best he sang the offertory:
knew, when	For wel he wyste, whan that song was songe	For well he knew that after he had sung,
preach, whet	He moste preche, and wel affyle his tonge,	For preaching he must polish up his tongue,
win	To wynne silver, as he right wel cowde:	And thus make money, as he right well could:
	Therfore he sang ful meriely and lowde.	Therefore he sang full merrily and loud.

Now I have told you as much as I can what people came into the Tabard Inn that night, and why they were all travelling together, and where they were going.

Our host[3] made us very welcome, and gave us a capital supper. He was a thoroughly good fellow, our host—a large, stout man, with bright, prominent eyes, sensible and well behaved, and very merry.

After supper, he made us all laugh a good deal with his witty jests; and when we had all paid our reckonings, he addressed us all:—

	And sayde thus: 'Lo, lordynges,	And said to us: 'My masters, certainly
truly	trewely	
	Ye ben to me right welcome hertely:	Ye be to me right welcome heartily:
shall lie	For by my trouthe, if that I schal not lye,	For by my truth, and flattering none, say I,
saw	I ne saugh this yeer so mery a companye	I have not seen so merry a company
inn (Fr. *auberge*)	At oones in this herbergh, as is now.	At once inside my inn this year, as now!
	Fayn wolde I do yow mirthe, wiste I how.	I'd gladly make you mirth if I knew how.
	And of a mirthe I am right now bythought,	And of a pleasant game I'm just bethought
do, ease	To doon you eese, and it schal coste nought.'	To cheer the journey—it shall cost you nought!'

'Whoever wants to know how, hold up your hands.' We all held up our hands, and begged him to say on.

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[1] A vernicle—diminutive of *Veronike*—was a small copy of the face of Christ, worn as a token that he had just returned from a pilgrimage to Rome.

[2] The Pardoner's eloquence and musical gifts account, perhaps, for the exquisite story he afterwards tells.

[3] The Host is elsewhere mentioned by name—Harry Baily, no doubt the well-known master of a well-known inn. His facial characteristics are dwelt upon.

'Well, my masters,' said he, 'I say that each of you shall tell the rest four stories—two on the way to Canterbury, and two on the way home. For you know it is small fun riding along as dumb as a stone. And whichever in the party tells the best story, shall have a supper at this inn at the cost of the rest when you come back. To amuse you better, I will myself gladly join your party, and ride to Canterbury at my own expense, and be at once guide and judge; and whoever gainsays my judgment shall pay for all we spend by the way. Now, tell me if you all agree, and I will get me ready in time to start.'

We were all well pleased; and the next morning, at daybreak, our clever host called us all together, and we rode off to a place called the Watering of St. Thomas.[1] There we halted, and drew lots who should tell the story first, knight, clerk, lady prioress, and everybody.

The lot fell to the knight, which every one was glad of; and as soon as we set forward, he began at once.

NOTES BY THE WAY.

[One of the things most deserving of notice in reading Chaucer is his singularly strong grasp of character. In the *Canterbury Tales* this is self-evident, and the succinct catalogue of the thirty-one pilgrims, which in feebler hands would have been dry enough, is a masterpiece of good-humoured satire, moral teaching, and, above all, photographic portraits from life. You will notice that Chaucer meant to make his *Canterbury Tales* much longer than he lived to do. His innkeeper proposes that each of the pilgrims shall tell four stories. Only twenty-four of these exist.

You will never find any character drawn by Chaucer acting, speaking, or looking inconsistently. He has always well hold of his man, and he turns him inside out relentlessly. He very seldom analyses thought or motives, but he shows you what *is* so clearly, that you know what *must* be without his telling you.

The good-humoured *naïveté* of mine host, like all his class, never forgetful of business in the midst of play, is wonderfully well hit off; for the innkeeper clearly would be the gainer by this pleasant stratagem: and he prevents any one's giving him the slip by going with them to Canterbury and back. The guests are glad enough of his company, for he could be especially useful to them on the way.

The stories, also, will be found perfectly characteristic of the tellers—there is no story given to a narrator whose rank, education, or disposition make it inconsistent. Each tells a tale whose incidents savour of his natural occupation and sympathies, and the view each takes of right or wrong modes of conduct is well seen in the manner as well as the matter.

Chaucer's personal distrust of and contempt for the contemporary Church and its creatures was the natural and healthy aversion of a pure mind and a sincerely religious heart to a form of godliness denying the power thereof—a Church which had become really corrupt. It is significant of his perfect artistic thoroughness that, with this aversion, he never puts an immoral or unfitting tale into the mouth of nun or friar; for it would be most unlikely that these persons, whatever their private character might be, would criminate themselves in public.

The characters are no doubt all portraits.]

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[1] Mr. Wright says this place was situated at the second milestone on the old Canterbury road.

THE KNIGHT'S TALE.[1]

ONCE upon a time, as old stories tell us, there was a duke named Theseus, lord and governor of Athens, in Greece, and in his time such a conqueror that there was none greater under the sun. Full many a rich country owned his sway.

GLOSSARY.		
	That with his wisdam and his chivalrie,	What with his wisdom and his chivalry
kingdom, Amazons	He conquerede al the regne of Femenye,	The kingdom of the Amazons won he,
once, called	That whilom was i-cleped Citheà ;	That was of old time naméd Scythia,
fresh	And weddede the fresshe quene Ipolità,[2]	And wedded the fresh Queen Ipolita,
country	And broughte hire hoom with him in his contrè,	And brought her to his own land sumptuously,
much, solemnity	With mochel glorie and gret solempnité ;	With pomp and glory, and great festivity ;
also, sister	And eek hire yonge suster Emelye,	And also her young sister Emelye.
music	And thus with victorie and with melodye	And thus with victory and with melody
duke	Lete I this noble duk to Athenes ryde,	Let I this noble duke to Athens ride,
arms	And al his host, in armes him biside.	And all his glittering hosts on either side.

And, certainly, if it were not too long to listen to, I would have told you fully how the kingdom of the Amazons was won by Theseus and his host. And of the great battle there was for the time between Athens and the Amazons; and how Ipolita—the fair, hardy queen of Scythia—was besieged; and about the feast that was held at the wedding of Theseus and Ipolita, and about the tempest at their home-coming. But all this I must cut short.

plough	I have, God wot, a large feeld to ere ;	I have, God knows, a full wide field to sow,
weak	And wayke ben the oxen in my plough.	And feeble be the oxen in my plough.

I will not hinder anybody in the company. Let everyone tell his story in time, and let us see now who shall win the supper!

I will describe to you what happened as Theseus was bringing home his bride to Athens.

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[1] *The Knight's Tale* is an adaptation from Boccaccio's *Teseide*. It can hardly be called a translation, as out of 2,250 lines Chaucer has only translated 270; only 374 bear a general, and 132 a slight, likeness to the *Teseide*. Boccaccio himself owed something to Statius. It was probably written in 1387.

[2] Tyrwhitt.

GLOSSARY.		
	This duk, of whom I make mencioùn,	This duke aforesaid, of deserved renown,
come	Whan he was comen almost unto the toun,	When he had almost come into the town
prosperity	In al his wele and in his moste pryde,	In all his splendour and in all his pride,
aware	He was war, as he cast his eyghe aside,	Perceivèd, as he cast his eyes aside,
kneeled, high-way	Wher that ther knelede in the hye weye	A company of ladies, in a row,
two	A companye of ladies, tweye and tweye,	Were kneeling in the highway—two by two,
each, black	Ech after other, clad in clothes blake;	Each behind each, clad all in black array;
woe	But such a cry and such a woo they make,	But such an outcry of lament made they,
there is not	That in this world nys creature lyvynge,	That in this world there is no living thing
lamenting	That herde such another weymentynge,	That e'er heard such another outcrying;
cease, would not	And of that cry they nolde nevere stenten,	Nor would they cease to wail and to complain
caught	Til they the reynes of his bridel henten.	Till they had caught him by his bridle-rein.
	'What folk be ye that at myn hom comynge	'What folk are ye who at my home-coming
perturb	Pertourben so my feste[1] with cryinge?'	Perturb my festival with murmuring,'
	Quod Theseus; 'Have ye so gret envye	Quoth Theseus. 'Or do you envy me
	Of myn honour, that thus compleyne and crie?	Mine honour that ye wail so woefully?
injured	Or who hath yow misboden or offended?	Or who hath injured you, or who offended?
	And telleth me, if it may ben amended;	Tell me, if haply it may be amended,
	And why that ye ben clothed thus in blak?'	And why are all of you in black arrayed?'
black		
them, spoke	The oldest lady of hem alle spak . . .	The oldest lady of them all then said—

'Lord, to whom fortune has given victory, and to live ever as a conqueror, we do not grudge your glory[2] and honour, but we have come to implore your pity and help. Have mercy on us in our grief. There is not one of us that has not been a queen or duchess; now we are beggars, and you can help us if you will.

'I was wife to King Capaneus, who died at Thebes:[3] and all of us who kneel and weep have lost our husbands there during a siege; and now Creon, who is king of Thebes, has piled together these dead bodies, and will not suffer them to be either burned or buried.'

And with these words all the ladies wept more piteously than ever, and prayed Theseus to have compassion on their great sorrow.

The kind duke descended from his horse, full of commiseration for the poor

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[1] Feste in this place means rather festival than feast, as Theseus was only on his way to the city.

[2] At this period the personal pronoun *you* was used only in the plural sense, or in formal address, as on the Continent now; whilst *thou* implied familiarity. The Deity, or any superior, was therefore addressed as *you:* intimates and inferiors as *thou*. Throughout Chaucer the distinction is noticeable: but as the present mode reverses the order, I have in my lines adhered to no strict principle, but have used the singular or plural personal pronoun according as it seemed most forcible.

[3] Thebes, in Greece.

ladies. He thought his heart would break with pity when he saw them so sorrowful and dejected, who had been lately of so noble a rank.

He raised them all, and comforted them, and swore an oath that as he was a true knight, he would avenge them on the tyrant king of Thebes in such a fashion that all the people of Greece should be able to tell how Theseus served Creon!

The duke sent his royal bride and her young sister Emelye onward to the town of Athens, whilst he displayed his banner, marshalled his men, and rode forth towards Thebes. For himself, till he had accomplished this duty, he would not enter Athens, nor take his ease for one half-day therein.

The duke's white banner bore the red statue of Mars upon it; and by his banner waved his pennon, which had the monster Minotaur (slain by Theseus in Greece) beaten into it in gold. Thus rode this duke—thus rode this conquerer and all his host—the flower of chivalry—till he came to Thebes.

To make matters short, Theseus fought with the King of Thebes, and slew him manly as a knight in fair battle, and routed his whole army. Then he destroyed the city, and gave up to the sorrowful ladies the bones of their husbands, to burn honourably after their fashion.

When the worthy duke had slain Creon and taken the city, he remained all night in the field. During the pillage which followed, it happened that two young knights were found still alive, lying in their rich armour, though grievously wounded. By their coat-armour[1] the heralds knew they were of the blood royal of Thebes; two cousins, the sons of two sisters. Their names were Palamon and Arcite.

These two knights were carried as captives to Theseus' tent, and he sent them off to Athens, where they were to be imprisoned for life; no ransom would he take.

Then the duke went back to Athens crowned with laurel, where he lived in joy and in honour all his days, while Palamon and Arcite were shut up in a strong tower, full of anguish and misery, beyond all reach of help.

Thus several years passed.

GLOSSARY.		
	This passeth yeer by yeer, and day by day,	Thus passeth year by year, and day by day,
morning	Till it fel oones in a morwe of May	Till it fell once upon a morn of May
see	That Emelye, that fairer was to seene	That Emelye—more beauteous to be seen
	Than is the lilie on hire stalkes grene,	Than is the lily on his stalk of green,
	And fresscher than the May with floures newe—	And fresher than the May with flowers new
flowers		
strove	For with the rose colour strof hire hewe,	(For with the rose's colour strove her hue;
hue		
abbr. ne wot, know not	I n'ot which was the fayrere of hem two—	I know not which was fairer of the two),
	Er it were day as was her wone to do,	Early she rose as she was wont to do,
dressed	Sche was arisen, and al redy dight;	All ready robed before the day was bright;

[1] A garment worn over the armour, on which the armorial bearings were usually embroidered, for the purpose of recognition. See *tabard*, p. 33.

GLOSSARY.		
sloth	For May wole han no sloggardye anyght.	For May time will not suffer sloth at night;
	The sesoun priketh every gentil herte,	The season pricketh every gentle heart,
	And maketh him out of his sleep to sterte,	And maketh him out of his sleep to start,
arise, thine	And seith, Arys, and do thin obser-vaunce.[1]	And saith, Rise up, salute the birth of spring!
	This maked Emelye han remem-braunce	And therefore Emelye, remembering
do	To don honour to May, and for to ryse.	To pay respect to May, rose speedily:
clothed	I-clothed was sche fressh for to devyse.[2]	Attired she was all fresh and carefully,
yellow	Hire yolwe heer was browdid in a tresse,	Her yellow hair was braided in a tress
	Byhynde hire bak, a yerde long I gesse.	Behind her back, a full yard long, I guess,
	And in the gardyn at the sonne upriste	And in the garden as the sun uprose
	Sche walketh up and doun wher as	She wandered up and down where as
pleased	hire liste.	she chose,
	Sche gadereth floures, party whyte and reede,	She gathereth flowers, partly white and red,
subtle	To make a sotil gerland[3] for hire heede,	To make a cunning garland for her head.
	And as an aungel hevenliche sche	And like an angel's singing rose her
sang	song.	song.
	The grete tour that was so thikke and strong	The mighty tower, that was so thick and strong,
	Which of the Castell was the cheef dongeoun	The castle's chiefest dungeon (wherein pent
	(Ther as the knightës weren in prisoun	The knights were doom'd to life-im-prisonment,
	Of which I toldë you, and tellen schal)	Of which I told you some, but not yet all)
	Was evene joynant to the gardeyn wal,[4]	Was close adjoining to the garden wall

[1] The rites and ceremonies observed on the approach of spring from the earliest times in many countries, have now died out in England, but they are among the most natural and beautiful of all popular fêtes. I have already in the preface alluded to the custom of riding out into the fields at daybreak to do honour to May, the month which was held to be the symbol of spring-time. Rich and poor, the court and the commoners, all rode out with one impulse. Boughs of hawthorn and laburnum were brought home to decorate all the streets, and dancing round the maypole, and feasting, and holiday-making, were observed almost like religious rites. It was a great privilege to be elected Queen of May, and one which every young maiden coveted. At a later time we read of Henry VIII. and Queen Catherine of Aragon formally meeting the heads of the corporation of London, on Shooter's Hill, to 'go a maying.'

But one thing should be remembered when we see how many pleasures were referred to May, and how much more people seemed to count on the weather of a month nowadays proverbially disappointing. The seasons were not the same then as they are now. Not because the climate of the land has altered so much, though that may be fairly surmised, but because the seasons were actually arranged otherwise. In Chaucer's time May began twelve days later than our May, and ended in the midst of June, and therefore there was a much better chance of settled weather than we have. This fact also accounts for the proverbial connection of Christmas and hard weather, snow, and ice, which *we* get as a rule in January, while December is foggy and wet. Twelfth Day was the old Christmas Day.

[2] At point devise—with exactness.

[3] The love of the Anglo-Saxons and the early English for flowers is very remarkable. The wearing of garlands of fresh flowers was a common practice with both sexes: a beautiful custom, followed by the Romans, and previously by the Greeks.

[4] The big round tower is one of the chain of fortresses linked by a solid wall

GLOSSARY.		
where, was amusing herself	Ther as this Emelye hadde hire pleyynge.	Wherein this Emelye was rambling.
	Bright was the sonne, and cleer that morwenynge;	Bright was the sun and clear that May morning,
	And Palamon, this woful prisoner,	And Palamon, that mournful prisoner,
	As was his wone, by leve of his gayler,	As was his wont, by leave of his gaolèr
roamed	Was risen and romede in a chambre	Was ris'n, and at an upper chamber
high	on heigh	stood
saw	In which he al the noble cité seigh,	Where his view all the noble city shew'd,
also	And eek the gardyn, ful of braunches grene,	And all the garden full of branches green
beautiful Germ. *schön*	Ther as this fresshe Emely the schene	Where this fresh Emely, beauteous to be seen,
roamed	Was in hire walk and romede up and doun.	Was in her walk and roaming up and down.
	This sorweful prisoner, this Palamon	This sorrowful prisoner, this Palamon
goeth	Gooth in the chambre, romyng to and fro,	Goes in his chamber—pacing to and fro—
	And to himself compleynyng of his woo:	Still to himself complaining of his wo,
said	That he was born, ful ofte he seyde alas!	That he was born full oft he sigh'd 'alas!'
chance	And so byfel by aventure or cas	And so befell, by chance or some strange case,
through	That thurgh a wyndow thikke, of many a barre	That thro' a window thick with many a bar
	Of iren greet, and squar as eny sparre,	Of iron, great and square as a ship's spar,
	He caste his eyen upon Emelya;	He cast his eyes on Emelye below;
blenched	And therwithal he bleynte, and cryede, a!	And therewith he blench'd, dazzled, and cried 'Oh!'
stung	As though he stongen were unto the herte.	Like a man stung, or wounded to the heart.
	And with that crye Arcite anon up-sterte	And at that cry Arcite did forward start
	And seyde, 'Cosyn myn, what eyleth the?	Saying, 'Dear cousin mine, what aileth thee?
	That art so pale and deedly on to see?	Thou art so pale, and deathly-white to see.
criedest thou, thee done	Why crydestow? who hath the doon offence?	Why did you cry out? What's the last offence?
	For Goddes love, tak al in pacience	For God's love, take it all in patience,
	Oure prisoun, for it may non other be:	This prison-life—it can't be otherwise—
given	Fortune hath yeven us this adversite.[1]	Fate is the cause of our adversities.
	. . . .	. . . .

running around the domain: from one of which the captive knights saw Emelye, her garden being within the walls, and as the castle was generally built on an eminence, on higher ground than the country beyond.

[1] Arcite is a fatalist. All his sentiments point to this—a philosopher of Necessarian doctrine. It is helpful to some minds, but others reject it as destructive of all effort and right feeling. Palamon seems to feel and resent his imprisonment less coolly, and never utters fatalistic sentiments, perhaps because his active mind never ceases to hope for redress.

GLOSSARY.		
	We moste endure it: this is the short and pleyn.'	We must endure it, this is short and plain.'
said	This Palamon answerde, and seyde ageyn	Palamon rebuking, answered him again,
opinion	'Cosyn, forsothe of this opynyoùn	'Cousin, forsooth, that fix'd opiniön
vain imagination	Thou hast a veyn ymaginacioùn.	Is but a vain imaginatiön.
	This prisone causede me not for to crye,	Nay, prison-misery did not cause my cry.
	But I was hurt right now thurghout myn eye	But I was hurt that moment thro' mine eye
mine	Into myn herte, that wol my bane be.	Unto my heart, and that my bane will be.
	The fairnesse of that lady that I see	The fairness of the lady that I see
roam	Yond in the gardyn rome to and fro	Yonder i' the garden roaming to and fro
	Is cause of al my crying and my wo.	Is cause of all my outcry and my wo;
abbr. ne wot, I know not	I not whether sche be womman or goddesse,	And I know not whether she be goddèss
truly	But Venus is it, soothly as I gesse.'[1]	Or woman—but 'tis Venus, as I guess.'
	And therwithal on knees adoun he	And therewith saying, falling on his
fell	fil,	knee,
	And seyde: 'Venus, if it be youre wil	He cried 'O Venus, if thy will it be,
yourself	Yow in this gardyn thus to transfigure,	Thus in the garden taking gentle shape
sorrowful	Biforn me sorweful wrecched creäture,	In sight of wretched, hapless, woeful me,
	Out of this prisoun help that we may scape.'	Out of this prison help us to escape.'
	. . . .	. . . .
began, spy	And with that word Arcite gan espye	And with that word Arcite cast his eye
	Wher as this lady romed to and fro.	Where this fair lady roamëd to and fro:
	And with that sight hire beauté hurte him so,	And with that sight, her beauty stung him so,
	That if that Palamon was wounded sore,	That if young Palamon is wounded sore,
	Arcite is hurt as moche as he, or more.	Arcite is hurt as much as he, or more.
said	And with a sigh he seyde pitously:	Then with a sigh he murmur'd piteously
	'The fressche beauté sleeth me sodeynly	'Ah, the fresh beauty slay'th me suddenly
	Of hir that rometh in the yonder place;	Of her that roameth out in yonder place:
	And but I have hire mercy and hire grace	And, save I win her mercy and her grace,
at the least	That I may seen hire atte leste weye,	That I at least may see her day by day,
am not: is not	I nam but deed; ther nys no more to seye.'	I am but dead—there is no more to say.'
	This Palamon, whan he tho wordes herde,	This Palamon, when he those words had heard,

[1] Palamon's excitable mind is probably slightly disordered by the privations of prison life. He mistakes for Venus, on whom his brain may be running, a figure which Arcite's cooler temperament at once recognises as a woman. Or, my theory may hold good, propounded in *Chaucer for Children*, which see Appendix, p. 108.

GLOSSARY.		
despitefully	Dispitously he loked, and answerde:	Furious he looked—and presently answèr'd——
	'Whether seistow this in ernest or in pley?'	'Whether sayst thou this—in earnest or in play?'
faith	'Nay,' quoth Arcite, 'in ernest by my fey.	'Nay,' said Arcite, 'in earnest, by my fay.
desire, evil	God help me so, me luste ful evele pleye.'	God help me, I am in no mood for playing.'
began	This Palamon gan knytte his browes tweye:	This Palamon knitted his brows then: saying,
two	'It nere,' quod he, 'to the no gret honour,	'It would be no great honour unto thee
traitor	For to be fals, ne for to be traytour	For to be false and traitorous to me
	To me, that am thy cosyn and thy brother	Who am by birth thy cousin, and thy brother
	I-sworn ful deepe, and ech of us to other,	Sworn solemnly, each of us to the other
die	That never for to deyen in the payne,[1]	That never, though we perish'd in the pain
	Til that the deeth departe schal us twayne,	Till death itself shall come to part us twain
hinder	Neyther of us in love to hyndren other,	Neither of us in love should cross the other,
case	Ne in non other cas, my leeve brother;	Nor yet in any other straits, dear brother.
	But that thou schuldest trewely forthren me	But that thou shouldest truly further me
	In every caas, and I schal forthren the.	In every case, as I shall further thee.
	This was thyn oth, and myn also certayn;	This was thy oath, and mine—and true it is:
certainly		
not	I wot right wel, thou darst it nat withsayn.	Right well I know thou dar'st not gainsay this.
	Thus art thou of my counseil,[2] out of doute.	Here thou art one with me, I cannot doubt.—
be	And now thou woldest falsly ben aboute	And now, thou wouldest falsely go about
	To love my lady, whom I love and serve,	To love my lady, whom I love and serve,
	And evere schal, til that myn herte sterve.	And shall, while I have life—my heart a nerve!
perish		
	Now certes, fals Arcite, thou schal not so.	Truly, false Arcite, that thou shalt not do.
	I lovede hire first, and tolde the my woo	I lov'd her first, and told to thee my wo
	As to my counseil, and my brother sworn	As to my friend, and brother too, who swore
	To forthre me, as I have told biforn.	To further me, as I have said before.
	For which thou art i-bounden as a knight	For which thing thou art bounden as a knight
	To helpe me, if it lay in thi might,	To help me if it lies within thy might:
dare, say	Or elles art thou fals, I dar wel sayn.'	Else you are false, and that I tell you plain.'

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[1] *The peyne.* Torture, used in every court of law.

[2] *Of my counsel*—on my side, or of my way of thinking.

GLOSSARY.		
	This Arcite ful proudly spak agayn.	This Arcite then full proudly spoke again.
shalt	'Thou schalt,' quoth he, 'be rather fals than I.	'*Thou* wilt be sooner false (he cries) than I.
	Bnt thou art fals, I telle the utterly.	And thou *art* false, I tell thee, utterly,
	For *par amour*[1] I lovede hir first er thow.	For *par amour* I lov'd her before thou.
wilt	What wolt thou sayn? thou wistest	What dost thou say? thou knewest
yet	not yit now	not just now
	Whether sche be a womman or goddesse.	Whether she were a woman or goddèss!
thine	Thyn is affeccioun of holynesse,[2]	Thine is affection unto holiness,
mine	And myn is love, as to a creäture;	And mine is love, as to a human thing,
	For which I tolde the myn adventure	For which I told thee of my suffering
	As to my cosyn, and my brother sworn.	As cousin, and sworn brother, of all men.
before	I pose, that thou lovedest hire biforn;	But given that you *had* lov'd her first, what then?
	Wost thou nat wel the olde clerkes[3] sawe,	Dost thou not recollect the old clerk's saw,
shall	That who schal yeve a lover eny lawe,	That who will, may, give lovers any law—
greater	Love is a grettere lawë, by my pan,	Love is a stronger law, I warrant, than
than, given	Then may be yeve to eny erthly man?	All ties imposed on any earthly man;
	Therfore posityf lawe, and such decré,	Therefore law positive by man's decree,
each	Is broke alday for love in ech degree.	Is daily broke for love in each degree.
must needs, head	A man moot needes love maugre his heed.	A man loves; well, he *must* love, maugr' his head.
flee	He may nought flen it, though he schulde be deed,[1]	He cannot 'scape it, tho' he should be dead,
	Al be sche mayde, or widewe or elles wyf.	Though she be maid, or widow, or else wife.
	And eek it is nat likly al thy lyf	Beside, it is not likely, all thy life
stand	To stonden in hire grace, no more schal I;	To win her grace at all, no more shall I.
verily	For wel thou wost thyselven verraily,	For well thou know'st thyself, that thou and I
doomed	That thou and I been dampned to prisoun	Are doom'd to suffer in this living grave
we shall gain	Perpetuelly, us gayneth no raunsoun.	For ever, and no ransom shall we have.
struggle	We stryve, as dide the houndes for the boon,	We're squabbling as the dogs did for the bone.
	They foughte al day, and yit here part was noon;	They fought all day, and yet they both got none.
	Ther com a kyte, whil that they were wrothe,	There came a kite that way while they were wroth

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[1] *Par amour:* an old phrase for to love excessively. The French retain it; *aimer*, for liking, *aimer avec amour* for being in love. Arcite's sentiments are fatalistic again, and he has the common mediæval feeling about love. See note [1], p. 66.

[2] A mere religious feeling.

[3] Boethius is the 'old clerk,' from whose book *De Consolatione* Chaucer has often borrowed.

Glossary.		
bare	And bar awey the boon bitwixe hem bothe.	And bore away the bone betwixt 'em both.
	And therfore at the kynges court,[1] my brother,	And therefore recollect, at court, my friend,
	Eche man for himself, ther is non other.	Each man for himself, that's all, and that's the end.
ever	Love if the list; for I love and ay schal;	Love, if you like. *I* love, and always shall.
truly, dear	And sothly, leeve brother, this is al.	We both may play at loving, and that's all.
must	Here in this prisoun moote we endure,	Here, in this prison, we shall stay, dear brother.
each, chance	And everych of us take his aventure.'	And one has just as good chance as the other.'

Long the two knights quarrelled and disputed about the lady who was out of their reach. But you shall see what came to pass.

There was a duke called Perithous, who had been fellow and brother in arms[2] of Duke Theseus since both were children, and he came to Athens to visit Theseus. These two dukes were very great friends: so much so that they loved no one so much as each other.

Now, Duke Perithous had known Arcite at Thebes, years before, and liked him, and he begged Theseus to let Arcite out of prison.

Theseus consented, but only on the condition that Arcite should quit Athens, and that he should lose his head, were he ever found there again.

So Arcite became a free man, but he was banished the kingdom.

How unhappy then Arcite was! He felt that he was worse off than ever. 'Oh, how I wish I had never known Perithous!' cried he. 'Far rather would I be back in Theseus' prison, for *then* I could see the beautiful lady I love.'

	How gret a sorwe suffreth now Arcite!	How great a sorrow suffereth now Arcite!
heart	The deth he feleth thurgh his herte smyte.	Grim death he feeleth thro' his body smite.
	. . . .	. . . .
	'O dere cosyn Palamon,' quod he,	'O my dear cousin, Palamon,' cried he,
thine, chance	'Thyn is the victorie of this aventure,	'In this ill hap the gain is on thy side.
may'st thou endure	Ful blisfully in prisoun maistow dure;	Thou blissful in thy prison may'st abide!
	In prisoun? certes nay, but in paradys!	In prison? truly nay—but in paradise!
thee	Wel hath Fortune y-torned the the dys,	Kindly toward thee hath Fortune turn'd the dice,
	That hast the sighte of hire, and I thabsence.	That hast the sight of her—not I, forced hither.
since	For possible is, syn thou hast hire presence,	'Tis possible, since thou art present with her,
	And art a knight, a worthi and an able,	And art a knight, a worthy and an able,
case	That by som cas, syn Fortune is chaungeable,	That by some means (luck is so variable)

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[1] *At the king's court:* probably a proverb.

[2] Formal compacts for the purpose of mutual counsel and assistance were common to the heroic and chivalrous ages.—*B.*

GLOSSARY.		
	Thou maist to thy desir somtyme atteyne.	Thou may'st attain to thy desire some day.
barren	But I that am exilëd and bareyne	But I who am exiled, and barren, yea,
all, great	Of alle grace, and in so gret despeir	Of all grace and all peace, and in despair,
is not	That ther nys erthe, water, fyr, ne eyr,	So that there is no fire, earth, water, air,
	Ne crëature that of hem makëd is,	Nor any creature that is made of them
do	That may me helpe or doon comfort in this.	That can console or heal me as I deem—
die, despair	Wel oughte I sterve in wanhope and distresse;	Needs must I die of hopeless dull distress—
life, strength	Farwel my lyf, my lust, and my gladnesse.	Farewell, my life, my strength, my happiness!
complain, in common	'Allas, why pleynen folk so in commune	'Alas, why do men murmur so together
	Of purveiance of God, or of Fortune,	At God's good Providence, or Fortune's either,
them	That yeveth hem ful ofte in many a	That giveth him full oft in many
guise	gyse	wise
they	Wel bettre than thei can hemself devyse?	More good and better than he can devise?
some, have	Som man desireth for to han richesse	This man desireth riches, which may bring
murder	That cause is of his morthre or gret	His own destruction or great suffering.
sickness	seeknesse.	
	And som man wolde out of his prisoun fayn,	And that man out of prison fain would be,
house, people	That in his hous is of his meyné slayn.	Then, by his servants slain at home is he.
matter	Infinite harmes ben in this mateere.	Infinite danger thus besets our way,
	We witen nat what thing we prayen	We know not what we pray for when
here	heere.	we pray.
drunk	We faren as he that dronke is as a mous.[1]	We fare like drunkards, stupid as a mouse—
	A dronke man wot wel he hath an hous,	A drunken man well knows he has a house,
knows not (ne wot)	But he not which the righte wey is thider,	But he don't know which is the right way thither,
	And to a dronke man the wey is slider:	And all the road seems sliding down together.
slippery		
fare	And certes in this world so faren we.	Lo, truly in this world so blind are we!
	We seeken faste after felicité,	Oft we pursue felicity so fast
truly	But we gon wrong ful ofte trewely.	That we do blunder by it in our haste.
say, namely	Thus may we seyen alle, and namelyche I	Thus we may all say, and especially I,
thought	That wende and hadde a gret opinioun	Who thought and held a firm opinion
if, escape	That yif I mighte skape fro prisoun	That if I got clear of my dungeon,
been, perfect	Than hadde I ben in joye and perfyt	I should be whole, and joyful, and at
heal, comfort	hele:	ease—
weal	Ther now I am exilëd fro my wele.	And there now, I am exiled from my peace!

[1] Dazed as a mouse under the cat's eye.

GLOSSARY.

see
am not, is not
side
knew
were
struggle
givest little heed
kindred
country
(Fr. aventure)
must
way
commander, advantage, (Fr. avantage)
(Fr. peine)
caught

Syn that I may not see you, Emelye,
I nam but deed: ther nys no remedye.'
Uppon that other syde Palamon
Whan that he wiste Arcite was agoon
Such sorwe he maketh, that the grete tour
Resowneth of his yolling and clamoùr.
The pure fettres on his schynes grete
Weren of his bittre salte teeres wete.
'Allas!' quod he, 'Arcita, cosyn myn,
Of al oure stryf, God woot, the fruyt is thin.
Thou walkest now in Thebes at thi large,
And of my woo thou yevest litel charge.
Thou maist, syn thou hast wysdom and manhede,
Assemblen al the folk of oure kynrede,
And make a werre so scharpe on this cuntrè[1]
That by som aventure, or som treté,
Thou maist have hire to lady and to wyf
For whom that I mot needes leese my lyf.
For as by wey of possibilité
Syth thou art at thi large, of prisoun free
And art a lord, gret is thin avauntage
More than is myn, that sterve here in a kage.
For I moot weepe and weyle, whil I lyve
With al the woo that prisoun may me yive,
And eeke with peyne that love me yeveth also
That doubleth al my torment and my wo.'
Therwith the fyr of jelousye upsterte
Withinne his breste, and hente him by the herte,

For since I cannot see you, Emelye,
I am but dead—there is no remedy.'
But on the other hand poor Palamon,
When he perceived that Arcite was gone,
Such sorrow he maketh, that the whole great tower
Resounded with his yelling and clamòur.
The very fetters on his shins so great
With all his salt and bitter tears were wet.
'Alas!' quoth he, 'Arcita, cousin mine!
Of all our strife, God knows the fruit is thine!
Thou walkest now in Thebes town, at large,
And of my wo thou hast nor heed nor charge.
Since strength, and wits, and manhood all are thine,
Thou may'st assemble all our kith and kin,
And wage a war so sharp upon this land
That by some chance—some treaty shrewdly plann'd,
Thou may'st get her to lady and to wife
For whose sweet sake I needs must lose my life.
For having such a possibility,
Since thou art out, at large, of prison free,
And art a lord—ah, what a chance hast thou!
Far more than mine—caged in and dying now.
For I may weep and wail while I do live,
With all the misery that jail may give,
And all the pain that love awakes alsò,
That doubleth all my torment and my woe.'
With that the fire of jealousy did start
Up in his breast and held him by the heart,

[1] Tyrwhitt.

GLOSSARY.

madly, like (Germ. *assche*)

So wodly that he lyk was to byholde The box-tree, or the asschen deede and colde.

So fiercely that his face was to behold Like white boxwood, or ashes dead and cold.

'O cruel gods!' he cried, 'that govern the world with your eternal laws, how is man better than a sheep lying in the fold? For, like any other beast, man dies, or lives in prison, or is sick, or unfortunate, and often is quite guiltless all the while. And when a beast is dead, it has no pain further; but man may suffer after death, as well as in this world.'

Now I will leave Palamon, and tell you more of Arcite.

Arcite, in Thebes, fell into such excessive sorrow for the loss of the beautiful lady that there never was a creature so sad before or since. He ceased to eat and drink, and sleep, and grew as thin and dry as an arrow. His eyes were hollow and dreadful to behold, and he lived always alone, mourning and lamenting night and day. He was so changed that no one could recognise his voice nor his look. Altogether he was the saddest picture of a man that ever was seen—except Palamon.

One night he had a dream. He dreamed that the winged god Mercury stood before him, bidding him be merry; and commanded him to go to Athens, where all his misery should end.

Arcite sprang up, and said, 'I will go straight to Athens. Nor will I spare to see my lady through fear of death—in her presence I am ready even to die!'

He caught up a looking-glass, and saw how altered his face was, so that no one would know him. And he suddenly bethought him that now he was so disfigured with his grief, he might go and dwell in Athens without being recognised, and see his lady nearly every day.

He dressed himself as a poor labourer, and accompanied only by a humble squire, who knew all he had suffered, he hastened to Athens.

He went to the court of Theseus, and offered his services at the gate to drudge and draw, or do any menial work that could be given him. Well could he hew wood and carry water, for he was young and very strong. Now, it happened that the chamberlain of fair Emelye's house took Arcite into his service.

Thus Arcite became page of the chamber of Emelye the bright, and he called himself Philostrate.

Never was man so well thought of!—he was so gentle of condition that he became known throughout the court. People said it would be but right if Theseus promoted this Philostrate, and placed him in a rank which would better display his talents and virtues.

At last Theseus raised him to be squire of his chamber, and gave him plenty of gold to keep up his degree. Moreover his own private rent was secretly brought to him from Thebes year by year. But he spent it so cunningly that no one suspected him. In this crafty way Arcite lived a long time very happily, and bore himself so nobly both in peace and war that there was no man in the land dearer to Theseus.

Now we will go back to Palamon.

Poor Palamon had been for seven years in his terrible prison, and was quite wasted away with misery. There was not the slightest chance of getting out; and his great love made him frantic. At last, however, one May night some

pitying friend helped him to give his gaoler a drink which sent him into a deep sleep: so that Palamon made his escape from the tower. He fled from the city as fast as ever he could go, and hid himself in a grove; meaning afterwards to go by night secretly to Thebes, and beg all his friends to aid him to make war on Theseus. And then he would soon either die or get Emelye to wife.

GLOSSARY.		
	Hit fel that in the seventhe yeer in May	It fell that in the seventh year, in May
	The thridde night, (as olde bookes seyn,	On the third night (as ancient books aver,
say	That al this storie tellen more pleyn)	Wherein the story is told plainlier),
(Fr. *aventure*)	Were it by aventure or destiné,	Were it by merest chance, or destiny
shaped	(As, whan a thing is schapen, it schal be,)	(As when a thing ordain'd is, it must be),
	That soone after the mydnyght, Palamoun	That somewhat after midnight, Palamon
	By helpyng of a freend brak his prisoun,	By a friend's help brake from his dungeòn
	And fleeth the cite faste as he may goo,	And fled the city, fast as he may go,
	For he hadde yive his gayler drinke soo	Having had means to dose his gaoler so
	Of a clarré,[1] maad of a certeyn wyn,	With a rare *clarré*, made of a certain wine,
	With nercotykes and opye of Thebes fyn,	With shrewd narcotics and Theban opium fine,
	That al that night though that men wolde him schake,	That all that night, though you might try to shake him,
	The gayler sleep, he mighte nought awake.	The gaoler slept, and nothing could awake him.
	And thus he fleeth as faste as evere he may.	And thus he flieth as fast as ever he may.
close upon	The night was schort, and faste by the day,	The night was short, and drawing to the day,
	That needes-cost he moste himselven hyde,	When at all costs himself he needs must hide.
	And til a grove faste ther besyde	And to a grove of trees that grew beside,
fearful	With dredful foot thau stalketh[2] Palomoun.	With frighted foot then stalketh Palamòn.
opinion	For schortly this was his opynyoun,	For, shortly, 'twas his resolutiòn
	That in that grove he wolde him hyde al day,	To lie in hiding in the grove all day,
would	And in the night then wolde he take his way	And in the night to take his wary way
	To Thebes-ward, his frendes for to preye	To Thebes, to gather friends from near and far
pray	On Theseus to holpe him to werreye.	To wage on Theseus a bitter war.
in short, either	And schorteliche, or he wolde lese his lyf,	Then in brief while himself would lose his life
	Or wynnen Emelye unto his wyf.	Or win fair Emelye to be his wife.
	This is theffect of his entente playn.	Here is th' effect, and his intent is plain.
turn	Now wol I torne unto Arcite agayn,	Now will I tell you of Arcite again,

[1] *Clarré:* a drink made of wine, honey, and spices, and afterwards *cleared* by straining.

[2] To stalk—a noiseless step, hence 'deer-stalking,' and the expression applied to ghosts 'that stalk abroad.'

Glossary.		
knew, near	That litel wiste how nyh that was his care,	Who little guess'd how nigh him was his care
	Til that fortune hadde brought him in the snare.	Until his fortune brought him in the snare.
	The busy larke, messager of day,	The busy lark, the messenger of day,
saluteth	Salueth in hire song the morwe gray;	Saluteth in her song the morning grey;
	And fyry Phebus ryseth up so brighte,	And fiery Phœbus riseth up so bright,
	That al the orient laugheth of the lighte,	That all the orient laugheth for the light;
rays	And with his stremes dryeth in the	And in the woods he drieth with his
groves	greves	rays
	The silver dropes, hongyng on the	The silvery drops that hang along the
leaves	leeves.	sprays.
royal	And Arcite, that is in the court ryal [1]	Arcite—unknown, yet ever waxing higher
squire	With Theseus, his squyer principal,	In Theseus' royal court, now chiefest squire—
	Is risen, and loketh on the merye day.	Is risen, and looketh on the merry day:
do, ceremony	And for to doon his observaunce to May,	And, fain to offer homage unto May,
	Remembryng on the poynt of his desir,	He, mindful of the point of his desire,
starting, fire	He on his courser, stertyng as the fir,	Upon his courser leapeth, swift as fire,
fields, play	Is riden into the feeldes him to pleye	And rideth to keep joyous holiday
	Out of the court, were it a myle or tweye.	Out in the fields, a mile or two away.
you	And to the grove of which that I yow tolde,	And, as it chanced, he made towards the grove,
chance, began	By aventure his wey he gan to holde,	All thick with leaves, whereof I spake above,
make	To maken him a garland of the greves,	Eager to weave a garland with a spray
	Were it of woodebynde or hawethorn	Of woodbine, or the blossoms of the
leaves	leves,	may.
sang, against	And lowde he song ayens the sonne scheene:	And loud against the sunshine sweet he sings,
	O May,[2] with al thy floures and thy greene,	'O May, with all thy flowers and thy green things,
	Welcome be thou, wel faire fressche May!	Right welcome be thou, fairest, freshest May!
some, may get	I hope that I som grene gete may.	Yield me of all thy tender green to-day!'
	And fro his courser, with a lusty	Then from his courser merrily he
heart	herte,	sprang,
started	Into the grove ful hastily he sterte,	And plunged into the thicket as he sang;

[1] The words *court* and *royal*, now applied only to the sovereign of the land, were applicable then to the domains of the great nobles, who were to all intents and purposes kings. Their pride, and wealth, and immense power, made them very formidable to the sovereign, as we constantly find in following the history of England or any other country. They often mustered as big an army as the king, because they could afford to pay the knights (see note 4, p. 33), and were invincible in their strongholds, surrounded by their serfs dependent on them.

[2] Tyrwhitt.

GLOSSARY.

roamed — And in a path he rometh up and doun, — Till in a path he chanced to make his way

where, chance — Ther as by aventure this Palamoun — Nigh to where Palamon in secret lay.

bush — Was in a busche, that no man might him see, — Sore frighted for his life was Palamon:

afraid, death — For sore afered of his deth was he. — But Arcite pass'd, unknowing and unknown;

Nothing ne knew he that it was Arcite: — And neither guess'd his brother was hard by;

knows, guessed, little — God wot he wolde han trowed it ful lite. — But Arcite knew not any man was nigh.

truly, gone, since — For soth is seyd, goon sithen many yeres, — So was it said of old, how faithfully,

eyes / ears — That feld hath eyen, and the woode hath eeres. — 'The woods have ears, the empty field can see.'

evenly balanced / meet, unfixed appointments — It is ful fair a man to bere him evene, For al day meteth men at unset stevene.[1] — Be wary, be prepar'd for every case, All day men meet in unexpected ways.

. . . . — . . . .

Whan that Arcite hadde romed al his fill, — Now when Arcite long time had roam'd his fill,

And songen al the roundel[2] lustily, — And sung all through the rondel lustily,

reverie — Into a studie he fel sodeynly, — He fell into dejection suddenly,

curious fashions — As don thes loveres in here queynte geeres, — As lovers in their strange way often do,

Now in the croppe,[3] now doun in the breres, — Now in the clouds and now in abject wo,

briars — Now up, now doun, as boket in a welle. — Now up, now down, as bucket in a well.

He sat down and began to make a kind of song of lamentation. 'Alas,' he cried, 'the day that I was born! How long, O Juno, wilt thou oppress Thebes? All her royal blood is brought to confusion. I myself am of royal lineage, and yet now I am so wretched and brought so low, that I have become slave and squire to my mortal foe. Even my own proud name of Arcite I dare not bear, but pass by the worthless one of Philostrate! Ah, Mars and Juno, save me, and wretched Palamon, martyred by Theseus in prison! For all my pains are for my love's sake, and Emelye, whom I will serve all my days.'

'Ye[4] slen me with youre eyen, Emelye; — 'You slay me with your eyes, O Emelye!

be — Ye ben the cause wherfore that I dye: — You are the cause wherefore I daily die.

remnant — Of al the remenant of myn other care — For, ah, the worth of all my other woes

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[1] It is good for a man to keep his mind so even-balanced that he is prepared for everything: for all day meetings, not *set* or arranged, are taking place.

[2] Rondel, or roundel, a round song or 'catch': see those p. 177. They were in three-line stanzas, like Arcite's.

[3] *Crop*, the top of the wood; *briars*, the thorny brushwood and weeds growing on the ground. This pretty metaphor well expresses the fluctuating moods of an overwrought state of feeling.

[4] *Ye*, the plural, was used respectfully, as the Germans use *Sie*, whilst *thou*, like the German *du*, was reserved for familiarity, either to a beloved equal, or to inferiors.

Glossary.		
amount	Ne sette I nought the mountaunce of a tare,	Is not as e'en the poorest weed that grows,
were able to	So that I couthe don aught to youre pleasaunce!'	So that I might do aught to pleasure you!'

Palamon, hearing this, felt as though a cold sword glided through his heart. He was so angry that he flung himself forth like a madman upon Arcite.

	And whan that he hadde herd Arcites tale,	And when that he had heard Arcitë's tale,
mad	As he were wood, with face deed and pale,	Like a man mad, with face all dead and pale,
	He sterte him up out of the bussches thikke	He darts from the thick bushes in his sight.
said	And seyde: 'False[1] Arcyte—false	Crying, 'False, wicked traitor! false
wicked	traitour wikke,	Arcite!
	Now art thou hent, that lovest my lady so,	Now art thou caught, that lov'st my lady so,
	For whom that I have al this peyne and wo,	For whom I suffer all this pain and wo!
counsel	And art my blood, and to my counseil sworn,	Yet art my blood—bound to me by thy vow,
before now	As I ful ofte have told the heere by-forn,	As I have told thee oftentimes ere now—
tricked	And hast byjaped here duk Theseus,	And hast so long befool'd Duke Theseus
	And falsly chaunged hast thy name thus;	And falsely hid thy name and nurture thus!
dead, else	I wol be deed, or elles thou schalt dye.	For all this falseness thou or I must die.
	Thou schalt not love my lady Emelye,	Thou shalt not love my lady Emelye—
more	But I wil love hire oonly and no mo;	But I will love her and no man but I,
foe	For I am Palamon, thy mortal fo.	For I am Palamon, thine enemy!
weapon	And though that I no wepne have in this place,	And tho' I am unarmed, being but now
escaped	But out of prisoun am astert by grace,	Escap'd from out my dungeon, care not thou,
fear	I drede not, that outher thou schalt dye,	For nought I dread—for either thou shalt die
	Or thou ne schalt not loven Emelye.	Now—or thou shalt not love my Emelye.
	Ches which thou wilt, for thou schalt	Choose as thou wilt—thou shalt not
escape	not asterte.'	else depart.'
then	This Arcite, with ful dispitous herte,	But Arcite, with all fury in his heart,
	Whan he him knew, and hadde his tale herde,	Now that he knew him and his story heard,
fierce	As fers as a lyoun, pullede out a swerde,	Fierce as a lion, snatch'd he forth his sword,
	And seide thus: 'By God that sit above,	Saying these words: 'By Him who rules above,
were it not	Nere it that thou art sik and wood for love,	Were't not that thou art sick and mad for love,

[1] Tyrwhitt.

GLOSSARY.		
also	And eek that thou no wepne hast in this place,	And hast no weapon—never should'st thou move,
	Thou schuldest nevere out of this grove pace,	Living or like to live, from out this grove,
step		
die	That thou ne schuldest deyen of myn hond.	But thou shouldest perish by my hand! on oath
defy	For I defye the seurté and the bond	I cast thee back the bond and surety, both,
sayest	Which that thou seyst that I have maad to the;	Which thou pretendest I have made to thee.
	What, verray fool, thenk wel that love is fre!	What? very fool! remember love is free,
in spite of	And I wol love hire mawgre al thy might.	And I will love her maugré all thy might!
because	But, for as much thou art a worthy knight,	But since thou art a worthy, noble knight,
art willing	And wilnest to derreyne hire by batayle,	And willing to contest her in fair fight,
pledge	Have heere my trouthe, to morwe I nyl not fayle,	Have here my troth, to-morrow, at daylight,
without knowledge, person	Withouten wityng of eny other wight,	Unknown to all, I will not fail nor fear
will, found	That heer I wol be founden as a knight,	To meet thee as a knight in combat here,
	And bryngen harneys[1] right inough for the;	And I will bring full arms for me and thee;
	And ches the beste, and lef the worste for me.	And choose the best, and leave the worst for me!
	And mete and drynke this night wil I brynge	And I will bring thee meat and drink to-night,
	Inough for the, and clothes for thy beddynge.	Enough for thee, and bedding as is right:
win	And if so be that thou my lady wynne,	And if the victory fall unto thine hand,
wood	And sle me in this woode, ther I am inne,	To slay me in this forest where I stand,
	Thou maist wel han thy lady as for me.'	Thou may'st attain thy lady-love, for me!'
	This Palamon answerde, 'I graunt it the.'	Then Palamon replied—'I grant it thee.'

Then these, who had once been friends, parted till the morrow.

all	O Cupide, out of alle charité!	O god of love, that hast no charity!
kingdom	O regne, that wolt no felawe have with the!	O realm, that wilt not bear a rival nigh!
truly, nor	Ful soth is seyd, that love ne lordschipe	Truly 'tis said, that love and lordship ne'er
willingly, fellowship	Wol not, his thonkes, have no felaweschipe.	Will be contented only with a share.
find	Wel fynden that Arcite and Palamoun.	Arcite and Palamon have found it so.
	Arcite is riden anon unto the toun	Arcite is ridden soon the town unto:

[1] Harness was a technical term for the complete armour or equipment, as opposed to portions, which were equally *armour*.

Glossary.		
before	And on the morwe, or it were dayes light,	And, on the morrow, ere the sun was high,
prepared	Ful prively two harneys hath he dight,	Two harness hath he brought forth privily,
sufficient	Bothe suffisaunt and mete to darreyne	Meet and sufficing for the lonely fight
field, them two	The bataylle in the feeld betwix hem tweyne.	Out in the battle-field mid daisies white.
carried	And on his hors allone as he was born,	And riding onward solitarily
before	He caryeth al this harneys him by forn;	All this good armour on his horse bore he:
	And in the grove, at tyme and place i-set,	And at the time and place which they had set
be	This Arcite and this Palamon ben met.	Ere long Arcite and Palamon are met.
then	Tho chaungen gan the colour in	To change began the colour of each
their	here face,	face—
kingdom	Right as the honter in the regne of Trace	Ev'n as the hunter's, in the land of Thrace,
	That stondeth in the gappe with a spere,	When at a gap he standeth with a spear,
	Whan honted is the lyoun or the bere,	In the wild hunt of lion or of bear.
groves	And hereth him come ruschyng in the greves,	And heareth him come rushing through the wood,
breaking	And breketh bothe bowes and the leves,	Crashing the branches in his madden'd mood,
	And thenketh, Here cometh my mortel enemy,	And think'th, 'Here com'th my mortal enemy,
without	Withoute faile, he mot be deed or I;	Now without fail or he or I must die;
	For eyther I mot slen him at the gappe,	For either I must slay him at the gap,
	Or he moot sleen me, if that me myshappe:	Or he must slay me if there be mishap.'
their hue	So ferden they, in chaungyng of here hewe,	So fared the knights so far as either knew,
far, them	As fer as everich of hem other knewe.	When, seeing each, each deepen'd in his hue.
was not, saluting	Ther nas no good day, ne no saluyng;	There was no greeting—there was no 'Good day,'
	But streyt withouten word or rehersyng,	But mute, without a single word, straightway
each, helped	Everych of hem help for to armen other,	Each one in arming turn'd to help the other,
own	As frendly, as he were his owne brother;	As like a friend as though he were his brother.
	And after that with here scharpe speres stronge	And after that, with lances sharp and strong,
foined	They foynen ech at other wonder longe.	They dash'd upon each other—lief and long.
then, seemed	Though myghtest wene that this Palamon	You might have fancied that this Palamon,
mad	In his fightyng were as a wood lyoun,	Fighting so blindly, were a mad lion,
	And as a cruel tygre was Arcite:	And like a cruel tiger was Arcite.
began	As wilde boores gonne they to smyte,	As two wild boars did they together smite.
their madness	That frothen white as foom, for ire wood.	That froth as white as foam for rage—they stood

Glossary.		
their	Up to the ancle foughte they in here blood.[1]	And fought until their feet were red with blood.
	And in this wise I lete hem fightyng dwelle;	Thus far awhile I leave them to their fight.
you	And forth I wol of Theseus yow telle.	And now what Theseus did I will recite.

Then something happened that neither of them expected.

It was a bright clear day, and Theseus, hunting with his fair queen Ipolita, and Emelye, clothed all in green, came riding by after the hart, with all the dogs around them; and as they followed the hart, suddenly Theseus looked out of the dazzle of the sun, and saw Arcite and Palamon in sharp fight, like two bulls for fury. The bright swords flashed to and fro so hideously that it seemed as though their smallest blows would fell an oak. But the duke knew not who they were that fought.[2]

Theseus smote his spurs into his horse, and galloped in between the knights, and, drawing his sword, cried, 'Ho![3] No more, on pain of death! By mighty Mars, he dies who strikes a blow in my presence!' Then Theseus asked them what manner of men they were, who dared to fight there, without judge or witness, as though it were in royal lists?[4]

You may imagine the two men turning on Theseus, breathless and bloody with fight, weary with anger, and their vengeance still unslaked.

	This Palamon answerde hastily,	And Palamon made answer hastily
need	And seyde: 'Sire, what nedeth wordes mo?	And said—'O Sire, why should we waste more breath?
two	We han the deth deserved bothe two.	For both of us deserve to die the death.
wretches, caitiffs	Two woful wrecches ben we, two kaytyves	Two wretched creatures are we, glad to die,
encumbered by	That ben encombred of oure owne lyves,	Tired of our lives, tired of our misery—
	And as thou art a rightful lord and juge	And as thou art a rightful lord and judge
give us not	Ne yeve us neyther mercy ne refuge.	So give us neither mercy nor refuge!
holy	And sle me first, for seynte charite;	And slay me first, for holy charity—
also	But sle my felawe eek as wel as me.	But slay my fellow too as well as me!
	Or sle him first; for, though thou	—Or slay him first, for though thou
little	knowe it lyte,	little know,
	This is thy mortal fo, this is Arcite,	This is Arcite—this is thy mortal foe,
	That fro thy lond is banyscht on his heed,	Who from thy land was banished on his head,
dead	For which he hath deserved to be deed.	For which he richly merits to be dead!
	For this is he that com unto thi gate	Yea, this is he who came unto thy gate,
was named	And seyde, that he highte Philostrate.	And told thee that his name was Philostrate—
befooled	Thus hath he japed the ful many a yer,	Thus year by year hath he defied thine ire—

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[1] An exaggeration simply for picturesque effect, such as many have indulged in since Chaucer.

[2] The helmet entirely concealing the face.

[3] *Ho* was the word by which the heralds or the king commanded the cessation of any action.

[4] What were called the 'lists' were the places built and enclosed for combats on horseback, and tournaments. These combats got sometimes very serious, and many knights and horses were wounded, or even killed.

GLOSSARY.		
made	And thou hast maked him thy cheef squyer.	And thou appointest him thy chiefest squire
	And this is he that loveth Emelye.	—And this is he who loveth Emelye!
	For sith the day is come that I schal dye,	For since the day is come when I shall die,
	I make pleynly my confessioùn,	Thus plain I make confession, and I own
that	That I am thilke woful Palamoun,	I am that miserable Palamon
	That hath thy prisoun broke wik-	Who have thy prison broken wil-
wickedly	kedly.	fully!
	I am thy mortal foo, and it am I	I am thy mortal foe,—and it is I
	That loveth so hoote Emelye the brighte,	Who love so madly Emelye the bright,
	That I wol dye present in hire sighte.	That I would die this moment in her sight!
sentence	Therfore I aske deeth and my juwyse;	Therefore I ask death and my doom to-day—
slay	But slee my felawe in the same wyse,	But slay my fellow in the self-same way:—
	For bothe han we deserved to be slayn.'	For we have both deservëd to be slain.'
	This orthy duk answerde anon agayn,	And angrily the duke replied again,
	And seyde: 'This is a schort conclu-	'There is no need to judge you any
	sioun:	more,
own	Your owne mouth, by youre confes-	Your own mouth, by confession, o'er
	sioun,	and o'er
condemned	Hath dampned you, and I wil it re-	Condemns you, and I will the words
	corde.	record.
	It needeth nought to pyne yow with	There is no need to pain you with the
	the corde.[1]	cord.
dead	Ye schul be deed, by mighty Mars the	Ye both shall die, by mighty Mars the
	reede!'	red!'

Then the queen, 'for verray wommanhede,' began to weep, and so did Emelye, and all the ladies present. It seemed pitiful that two brave men, both of high lineage, should come to such an end, and only for loving a lady so faithfully. All the ladies prayed Theseus to have mercy on them, and pardon the knights for their sakes. They knelt at his feet, weeping and entreating him—

	And wold have kist his feet ther as he stood,	And would have kissed his feet there as he stood,
	Till atte laste aslaked was his mood;	Until at last appeasëd was his mood,
runneth	For pite renneth sone in gentil herte,	For pity springeth soon in gentle heart.
shook	And though he first for ire quok and sterte,	And though he first for rage did quake and start,
	He hath considerd shortly in a clause	He hath considered briefly in the pause
	The trespas of hem bothe, and eek the cause:	The greatness of their crime, and, too, its cause;
their	And although that his ire here gylt accusede,	And while his passion had their guilt accused,
them	Yet in his resoun he hem bothe ex-	Yet now his calmer reason both ex-
	cusede.	cused.

[1] A form of torture to extort confession. Theseus' grim humour at this juncture implies how far lightlier human life was held then than now. But he was naturally in a

Everybody had sympathy for those who were in love;[1] and Theseus' heart had compassion of women, for they wept ever in on' (continually).

So the kindly duke softened, and said to all the crowd good-humouredly, What a mighty and great lord is the god of love!'

Glossary.		
	'Lo, her this Arcite and this Palamoun,	'Here are this Arcite and this Palamon,
freely	That quytly weren out of my prisoun,	Safe quit of prison both, who might have gone
	And might have lyved in Thebes ryally,	And dwelt in Thebes city royally,
royally		
know, their	And witen I am here mortal enemy,	Knowing I am their mortal enemy.
their, lieth	And that here deth lith in my might also,	And that their death within my power lies:
	And yet hath love, maugré here eyghen tuo,	Yet hath blind Love, in spite of both their eyes,
	I-brought hem hider bothe for to dye.	Led them both hither only to be slain!
look, high	Now loketh, is nat that an heih folye?	Behold the height of foolishness most plain!
be	Who may not ben a fool, if that he love?	Who is so great a fool as one in love?
	Byholde for Goddes sake that sit above,	For mercy's sake—by all the gods above,
	Se how they blede! be they nought wel arrayed!	See how they bleed! a pretty pair are they!
	Thus hath here lord, the god of love,	Thus their liege lord, the god of love,
them	y-payed	doth pay
their	Here wages and here fees for here servise.	Their wages, and their fees for service done;
think	And yet they wenen for to ben ful wise,	And yet each thinks himself a wise man's son

---

great rage when he knew who the knights were. Palamon's insolent address in the *singular* personal pronoun was not likely to mollify him, coming as it did from a captive, though an equal by birth.

[1] How idealised, and how idolised, the passion of love had grown to be with the new elevation of woman's condition in these times is well known. Love literally covered a multitude of sins: the malefactor was pardoned whose offences were caused by love; the rough was made smooth for the feet of love to tread upon. There was a reason for this. It is but too true that the morals of the people will not bear the light of modern times; but it would be unfair to judge them by that light. Those were rough days, when laws were often feeble, narrow, or ill-enforced. The want of legal organisation placed a great refining and ennobling power in the hands of woman. Many a knight who was coarse or cowardly was pricked to courteous ways and deeds of courage by his love of some fair woman, when without it he would have sunk lower and lower in vice and degradation. The arts were ofttimes cultivated to win a woman's ear or eye; knowledge itself was sought for her sake, for knowledge is power. Of course the love of courtesy, valour, and learning were deeply rooted in the age, or the woman's sympathy could not have existed. But her encouragement of all that was æsthetic, her influence over men, and therefore the impetus she gave to the higher life, must never be underrated, however we may reprove the errors of that day. The institution of actual 'Courts of Love'—tribunals for the judgment of love-matters, bearing a definite recognition, and which seem so strange, almost repulsive to us, presided over as they were by ladies only—was the result of the worship of physical beauty and the passion which it inspired, and the proof, however grotesque, of the real value seen to lie in it. This will be better understood when we observe that even children were encouraged to cultivate somewhat of this ideal love, and the childish education of boys and girls consisted to a very large extent in learning the art of writing love-letters. Thus Palamon's and Arcite's adoration of fresh Emelye are seen to be neither exaggerated nor futile.

GLOSSARY.		
serve	That serven love, for ought that may bifalle.	Who serveth Love, whatever may befall.
	But this is yet the beste game of alle,	But this is still the greatest joke of all,
fun	That sche, for whom they han this jolitee,	That she, the cause of this rare jollity,
can them, much	Can hem therfore as moche thank as me.	Owes them about as many thanks as I!
knows	Sche woot no more of al this hoote fare,	She knew no more of all this hot to-do,
knows	By God, than wot a cuckow or an hare.	By Mars! than does a hare or a cuckoo!
must be tried	But al moot ben assayed, hoot and colde;	But one must have one's fling, be't hot or cold;
must be, either	A man moot ben a fool other yong or olde;	A man will play the fool either young or old.
	I woot it by myself ful yore agon:	I know it by myself—for long ago
one	For in my tyme a servant was I on.'	In my young days I bowed to Cupid's bow.'

This is as if he should say, 'These two foolish boys have got nothing from their liege lord, the god of love, but a very narrow escape with their heads. And Emelye herself knew no more of all this hot business than a cuckoo! But I, too, was young once, and in love, and so I won't be hard upon them!' 'I will pardon you,' he added, 'for the queen's sake and Emelye's, but you must swear to me never to come and make war on me at any time, but be ever my friends in all that you may for the future.'

And they were very thankful and promised as he commanded.

Then Theseus spoke again, in a kind, half-laughing way:—

speak, royal	'To speke of real lynage and richesse,	'And as for wealth and rank, and royal birth,
	Though that sche were a queen or a	Although she were the noblest upon
princess	pryncesse,	earth,
each	Ech of yow bothe is worthy douteles	Each of you both deserves to wed your
marry, nevertheless	To wedden, when tyme is, but nathe-	flame,
	les,	Being of equal worth; but all the
	I speke as for my suster Emelye,	same
	For whom ye han this stryf and	It must be said, my sister Emelye
	jelousye,	(For whom ye have this strife and
know	Ye wite youreself, sche may not wedde	jealousy),
	two	You see yourselves full well that she
once, fought	At oones, though ye fighten evere	can never
	mo;	Wed two at once although ye fought
unwilling or willing	That oon of yow, or be him loth or	for ever!
	leef,	But one of you, whether he likes or
must	He mot go pypen in an ivy leef;[1]	no,
		Must then go whistle, and endure his
	This is to sayn, sche may nought now	wo.
	han bothe,	That is to say, she cannot have you
	Al ye be nevere so jelous, ne so	both,
angry	wrothe.'	Though you be never so jealous or so
		wroth.'

[1] 'To pipe in an ivy leaf:' a proverbial expression, similar to 'go whistle'—meaning to be engaged in any useless employment.

With that he made them this offer—that Palamon and Arcite should each bring in a year's time (fifty weeks) a hundred knights, armed for the lists,[1] and ready to do battle for Emelye; and, whichever knight won, Palamon and his host, or Arcite and his host, should have her for his wife.

Who looks happy now but Palamon! and who springs up with joy but Arcite! Every one was so delighted with the kindness of Theseus that they all went down on their knees to thank him—but of course Palamon and Arcite went on their knees most.

Now, the preparations Theseus made for this great tournament were something wonderful.

First, the theatre for the lists had to be built, where the tournament was to take place. This was built in a circular form, with hundreds of seats rising up on all sides one behind another, so that everybody could see the fight, and no one was in anybody's way. The walls were a mile round, and all of stone, with a ditch running along the outside. At the east and at the west stood two gates of white marble, and there was not a carver, or painter, or craftsman of any kind that Theseus did not employ to decorate the theatre. So that there never was such a splendid place built in all the earth before or since.

Then he made three temples: one over the east gate for Venus, goddess of love; one over the west gate for Mars, who is god of war; and towards the north, he built a temple all alabaster and red coral; and that was for Diana. All these beautiful things cost more money than would load a cart.

Now for what the temples were like inside.

First, in the Temple of Venus were wonderful paintings of feasts, dancing, and playing of music, and beautiful gardens, and mountains, and people walking about with the ladies they liked. All these were painted on the walls in rich colour.

There was a statue of Venus besides, floating on a sea of glass, and the glass was made like waves that came over her. She had a citole in her hand, which is an instrument for playing music on; and over her head doves were flying. Little Cupid was also there, with his wings, and his bow and arrows, and his eyes blinded, as he is generally made.

Then, in the Temple of Mars, who is the god of war, there were all sorts of dangers and misfortunes painted. Battles, and smoke, and forests all burning with flames, and men run over by carts, and sinking ships, and many other awful sights. Then a smith forging iron—swords and knives for war.

The statue of Mars was standing on a car, armed and looking as grim as possible; there was a hungry wolf beside him.

As for the Temple of Diana, that was very different from Venus's. Venus wishes everybody to marry the one they love. Diana does not want any one to marry at all, but to hunt all day in the fields. So the pictures in Diana's Temple were all about hunting, and the merry life in the forest.

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[1] The tournament, great as the loss of life often was, seems to have been the greatest delight of the people in the middle ages. The ladies especially loved them, as they were often in homage to themselves. The victor in the mimic battle received a crown from the queen of the tournament. In this case, Emelye is not asked whether she likes to be disposed of thus coolly! but she could not fail to be touched by the great compliment paid her.

Her statue showed her riding on a stag, with dogs running round about, and underneath her feet was the moon. She was dressed in the brightest green, and she had a bow and arrows in her hand.

Now you know all about the splendid theatre and the three temples.

At last the day of the great tournament approached!

It was on a Sunday, about nine o'clock in the morning, when all the lords and knights came into Athens.

GLOSSARY.		
returning	The day approcheth of here retournynge	The day approacheth for the mustering
should	That everych schulde an hundred knyghtes brynge	When each of them a hundred knights should bring
you	The bataille to derreyne as I you tolde.	To battle out the question, as I told.
to	And til Athenes, here covenant to holde	And now in Athens, covenant to hold,
every one	Hath everych of hem brought an hundred knightes	Each with his hundred knights, the rivals are:
(Germ. *rechts*)	Wel armëd for the werre at allë rightes.	Well arm'd at all points, for the mimic war.
surely	And sikerly ther trowede many a man	And true it is, declareth many a man,
since	That nevere, siththen that the world bigan	That never since the world itself began
	As for to speke of knighthod of here hond	As regards knights, and skill of knightly hand,
made	As fer as God hath maked see or lond,	As far as God created sea and land,
abb. *Ne was* / There was not	Nas, of so few, so noble a compainye.	Was, in so few, so noble a company.
	For every wight that lovede chyvalrye	For every man that cared for chivalry
willingly	And wolde, his thankes, han a passant name	And had a will to win a passing name
	Hath preyed that he mighte ben of that game;	Hath begg'd a place in such a brilliant game;
	And wel was him that thereto chosen was!	And blithe was he that thereto chosen was!
case	For if ther fel tomorwe such a caas	For if there fell to-morrow such a case,
know	Ye knowen wel, that every lusty knight	Ye know full well that every lusty knight
	That loveth paramours,[1] and hath his might	That loved a dame, and had the means and might,
	Were it in Englelond or elleswhere	Whether it were in England or elsewhere,
willingly, wish	They wolde, here thonkes, wilne to be there.	Would wish and strive and hasten to be there.
	To fighte for a lady: *benedicite*!	To fight for a lady—benedicite!
	It were a lusty sightë for to see.	Such jousting were a lusty sight to see.
fared	And right so ferden they with Palamon.	And thus they mustered under Palamon.
	With him ther wentë knightës many oon.	With him there went good warriors, many a one.
	Som wol ben armëd in an habergoun	Some would be armed in a habergeon
	In a brestplat and in a light gypoun.	In a breastplate, and in a light gipon:
	And somme wold have a peyre plates large;	Some chose a pair of plates, so bright and large,

[1] *Par amour*—see p. 53, note [1].

GLOSSARY.		
	And somme wold have a Pruce scheld,[1] or a targe;	Some bore a Prussian shield, and some a targe:
	Somme woln been armed on here legges weel,	Some would be armed upon the legs full well,
also	And have an ax, and somme a mace of steel.	And have an axe—and some a mace of steel.
	Ther nys no newe gyse, that it nas old.[2]	There was no newest guise but it was old.
	Armed were they, as I have you told,	Thus were the forces arm'd, as I have told.
own	Everich after his owen opinioùn.	Each man after a fancy of his own.
	Ther maistow sen, comyng with Palamoun,	Then might you see, coming with Palamon
	Ligurge[3] himself, the grete kyng of Trace;	Licurge himself, the mighty king of Thrace;
	Blak was his berd, and manly was his face.	Black was his beard, and manly was his face,
eyes	The cercles of his eyen in his heed	The circles of his eyes within his head
between	They gloweden bytwixe yolw and reed,	Glow'd of a hue part yellow and part red,
	And lik a griffoun loked he aboute,	And like a griffon lookëd he about,
stout	With kempe heres[4] on his browes stowte;	With hair down-combed upon his brows so stout;
limbs, muscles	His lymes grete, his brawnes hard and stronge,	His limbs were great, his muscles hard and strong,
shoulders	His schuldres broode, his armes rounde and longe.	His shoulders broad, his arms were round and long.
guise, country	And as the gyse was in his contré,	According to the fashion of his land,
high, car	Ful heye upon a char of gold stood he,	Full high upon a car of gold stood he
bulls, the traces	With foure white boles in a trays.	And to the car four bulls were link'd, milk-white.
	In stede of cote-armure on his harnays,	'Stead of coat-armour on his harness bright.
	With nales yelwe and bright as eny gold,	With yellow nails and bright as any gold,
very old	He had a beres skyn, col-blak, for-old.	A bear's skin hung, coal-black, and very old.
long hair combed	His longe heer was kembd byhynde his bak,	His flowing hair was comb'd behind his back,
shone	As eny ravenes fether it schon for blak.	As any raven's wing it shone for black.
	A wrethe of gold arm-gret, of huge wighte,	A wreath of gold, arm-thick, of monstrous weight.
	Upon his heed, set ful of stoones brighte,	Crusted with gems, upon his head was set,
diamonds	Of fyne rubies and of fyn dyamauntz.	Full of fine rubies and clear diamonds.

[1] The knight, having fought in Prussia, refers to the Prussian modes.

[2] Classic? Possibly some hint of Renascence fashions which may have appeared in Florence as early as that.

[3] Lycurgus.

[4] *Kemped heres:* Dr. Morris rejects the usual rendering of the word kemped as combed, and asserts that it means the very reverse, and, 'instead of smoothly combed, means bent, *curled*, and hence rough, shaggy.' A similar term occurs a few lines farther on, describing the hair 'kempt behind his back,' where Dr. Morris reads combed. It seems, however, contrary to the rule of courtesy observed by lovers, that a noble knight should appear at a festival like a wild man of the woods. If, on the other hand, the shaggy hairs were on the *eyebrow*, it certainly adds to the ferocity of his looks. I prefer the former reading for Emelye's bridegroom.

GLOSSARY.		
	Aboute his char ther wenten white alauntz,[1]	About his car there leapëd huge white hounds,
steer (bullock)	Twenty and mo, as grete as eny stere,	Twenty and more, as big as any steer,
	To hunten at the lyoun or the bere,[2]	To chase the lion or to hunt the bear,
muzzle	And folwede him, with mosel fast i-bounde,	And follow'd him, with muzzles firmly bound,
spikes, filled	Colerd with golde, and torettz[3] fyled rounde.	Collar'd in gold, with golden spikes around.
	An hundred lordes hadde he in his route	A hundred lords did follow in his route,
	Armed ful wel, with hertes stern and stoute.	Well arm'd they were, with bearing stern and stout.
	With Arcita, (in stories as men fynde)	With Arcite (as men in stories find)
India	The gret Emetreus, the kyng of Ynde,	The great Emetrius, the Indian King,
	Uppon a steede bay, trapped in steel,	Upon a bay steed trapp'd in shining steel,
diapered	Covered with cloth of gold dyapred wel,	Covered with cloth of gold from head to heel,
like	Cam rydyng lyk the god of armes, Mars.	Came riding like the god of armies, Mars;
	His coote-armure was of cloth of Tars,[4]	His coat-armour was made of cloth of Tars,
overlaid	Cowched with perles whyte, and round, and grete.	O'erlaid with pearls all white and round and great:
burnished	His sadel was of brend gold newe y-bete;	His saddle was of smooth gold, newly beat.
mantle	A mantelet[5] upon his schuldre hangynge	A mantlet on his shoulder as he came,
cram-full, fire	Bret-ful of rubies reed, as fir sparklyng.	Shone, cramm'd with rubies sparkling like red flame,
run	His crispe her lik rynges was i-ronne,	And his crisp hair in shining rings did run,
yellow-brown	And that was yelwe, and gliterede as the sonne.	Yellow it was, and glittering as the sun.
	His nose was heigh, his eyen bright cytryn,[6]	His nose was high, his eyes were bright citrine,

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[1] *Alauns:* a species of dog used for hunting the boar, &c. Spanish, *alano*. Speght says they were greyhounds, Tyrwhitt mastiffs, much esteemed in Italy in the fourteenth century. See Cotgrave—'*Allan*, a kind of big, strong, thick-headed, and short-snowted dog—the brood whereof came first out of Albania.' The *alano* now is the large brindled mastiff-like dog seen in the mountains in Spain with the shepherds and neatherds: the same word exists in the Neapolitan *patois*, in the Spanish sense.

[2] Aldine ed.

[3] They wore gold collars filled with *torettz*. This word is variously explained. *Torete*, ring-turret (Morris); ring or terret (Bell). '*Toret*, a small wimble (or auger, big gimblet); touret, a drill, &c.' (Cotgrave). '*Gros clou dont la tête arrondie est arrêtée dans une branche d'un mors*' (*Suppl. to Fr. Acad. Dict.*); 'tourette,' a little tower. I have ventured on translating 'toret' *spike*, after vainly seeking for authority for a collar filled with rings; though a single ring often hung beneath the throat. Contemporary illustrations of dogs' collars filled with long spikes are common enough—*e.g.* the fine fourteenth century tapestry now in the museum at Chartres, &c. In India dogs are furnished with spiked collars in tiger and boar hunting: the allans were clearly hunting dogs, and such spiked collars would thus be almost indispensable.

[4] A kind of rich silk, probably oriental—from Tarsus.

[5] The 'mantelet' was at first devised to protect the burnished helmet from becoming inconveniently heated by the sun: it became afterwards fantastic in form, and is the origin of the 'mantling' seen in modern coats of arms.

[6] Citrine, one of the tertiary colours: a kind of citron-colour.

GLOSSARY		
	His lippes rounde, his colour was sangwyn,	His lips were round, his colour was sanguine,
sprinkled	A fewe fraknes in his face y-spreynd,	With a few freckles scattered here and there,
somewhat, mixed	Betwixe yelwe and somdel blak y-meynd,	'Twixt black and yellow mingling they were,
looking	And as a lyoun he his lokyng caste.	And lionlike his glance went to and fro,
suppose	Of fyve and twenty yeer his age I caste.	His age was five and twenty years, I trow.
	His berd was wel bygonne for to sprynge;	A downy beard had just begun to spring,
	His voys was as a trumpe thunderynge.	His voice was like a trumpet thundering.
laurel	Upon his heed he werede of laurer grene	Upon his head he wore a garland green,
	A garlond fresch and lusty for to sene.	Of laurel, fresh, and pleasant to be seen.
hand, delight	Upon his hond he bar for his deduyt[1]	Upon his wrist he bore for his delight
eagle, any	An egle tame, as eny lylie whyt.	An eagle, tame, and as a lily white.
	An hundred lordes hadde he with him ther,	A hundred lords he had about him there
Fr. *sauf*, save —	Al armed sauf here hedes in here ger.	All arm'd, except the head, in warlike gear.

About this king ran many tame lions and leopards.

There was a great festival, and the dancing, and minstrelsy, and feasting, and rich array of Theseus' palace were most wondrous to behold. I should never have time to tell you

be	What ladies fayrest ben, or best daunsynge,	What ladies danced the best, or fairest were,
sing	Or which of hem can carole[2] best and singe,	Or which of them best sung or carol'd there;
	Ne who most felyngly speketh of love;[3]	Nor who did speak most feelingly of love;
sit	What haukes sitten on the perche above,	What hawks were sitting on the perch above,
lie	What houndes liggen on the floor adoun.	What hounds lay crouching on the floor adown.

Then there were the temples to visit, to ask grace and favour from the gods. Palamon went to the Temple of Venus, the goddess of love, and prayed her to help him to gain his lady. Venus promised him success.

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[1] This fair countenance is oddly assigned to an Indian monarch: but some of the details of his appearance are poetic embellishments, and must not be relied upon. The white eagle carried for his pleasure is probably one of the many exaggerations for picturesque effect, and is only a magnified falcon, a bird which was at this time the constant companion of the noble: hawking was in high favour, and the bird's tameness depended on its habituation to its owner's voice and touch. A little later on the hawks are mentioned as sitting on perches during the festival; such perches were in every room and hall in common life; so provision had to be made for their accommodation on the grandest occasions. In Wright's *Womankind* we read: 'Different species of the hawk were allotted to persons of the different grades and ranks of society. Thus we are told that the eagle and the vulture belonged to the emperor, from which we must understand that the emperor was not expected to go often a-hawking.' Evidently Chaucer was well read in his books on falconry.

[2] *Carole* (Tyrwhitt—the other editions have *dance*) was a round dance, probably accompanied by the voices of the dancers, as in a 'singing quadrille.'

[3] See note 1, p. 66.

Arcite thought it more prudent to go to the god of war, Mars; so he sacrificed in his temple, and prayed for victory in the lists. Mars promised him the victory.

But Emelye did not wish to marry either of her lovers. She went to the temple of Diana early in the morning, and asked the goddess to help her *not* to get married! She preferred her free life, walking in the woods and hunting. She made two fires on Diana's altar: but Diana would not listen to her, and both the fires went out suddenly, with a whistling noise, and Emelye was so frightened that she began to cry. Then Diana told her that she was destined to marry one of these poor knights who had suffered so much for her, and so she must make up her mind to it.

Emelye then departed: but Mars and Venus had a great dispute, because, as you know, they had promised success to each of the two knights, and Emelye could not marry both. Now, you shall see how each of them managed to gain a victory.

All Monday was spent in jousting and dancing, and early on Tuesday began the great tourney.

GLOSSARY.		
began	And on the morwe whan that day gan sprynge,	And on the morrow, as the day 'gan spring,
	Of hors and herneys noyse and claterynge	Noises of horse and harness clattering
	Ther was in the hostelryes al aboute;	Sounded in all the hostelries about!
	And to the paleys rood ther many a route	And to the palace rode a lengthening route
	Of lordes, upon steedes and palfreys.	Of lords on steeds and palfreys without price.
devising	Ther mayst thou seen devysyng of herneys	There might you see harness of strange device,
	So uncowth[1] and so riche and wrought so wel	Curious and rich, with wondrous goldsmithry
embroidering	Of goldsmithrye, of browdyng, and of steel;	And fine steel work, and dainty broidery.
head-pieces	The scheldes brighte, testers, and trappures;	The shining shields, trappings, and head-pieces,
	Gold-beten helmes, hauberkes, cote armures;	Gold-beaten helms, mail-coats, and armour-dress,
ornamental apparel	Lordes in paramentz on here courseres,	Lords in gay gear upon their coursers tall,
	Knightes of retenue, and eek squyeres	And knights of retinue—squires in yard and hall
	Naylyng the speres, and helmes bokelynge,	Nailing on spear-heads, buckling helms, with clash
(Fr. *lanière*) thong	Giggyng of scheeldes, with layneres lasynge;	Of shifting shields, lacing the tight whip-lash;
	Ther as need is, they were nothing ydel;	Wherever need was—not a man was idle.
	The fomy steedes on the golden bridel	The foamy steeds upon the golden bridle
champing the bit	Gnawyng, and faste the armurers also	Gnawing, and fast the armourers also

[1] Uncouth, not known, unfamiliar, from *kouthe*, to know, or be able. It is often used for foreign.

Glossary.		
	With fyle and hamer prikyng to and fro;	With file and hammer pricking to and fro;
commons	Yemen on foote, and communes many oon	Yeomen on foot, and flocking through the land,
go	With schorte staves, thikke as they may goon;	Commons with short staves, thick as they can stand.
kettledrums	Pypes, trompes, nakeres, clariounes,	Pipes, kettledrums, trumpets, and clarion-chime
battle (Fr. *bataille*)	That in the bataille blowe bloody sownes;	That blow the bloody signal in war-time;
	The paleys ful of peples up and doun,	The palace full of people, up and down,
	Heer thre, ther ten, holdyng here questioun,	Here three, there ten, debate and questiòn
guessing (Fr. *diviner*)	Dyvynyng of thise Thebane knightes two.	Discussed the Theban knights, the famous two.
	Somme seyden thus, somme seyd it schal be so;	Some said 'Tis *thus*,' some said 'It will be *so*.'
black	Somme heelde with him with the blake berd,[1]	Some held with him that had the blackish beard,
	Somme with the balled, somme with the thikke herd;	Some with the bald, and some with the thick-hair'd:
fierce	Somme sayde he lokede grym and wolde fighte;	Some said 'He looks a grim one!' and '*He*'ll fight!
battle-axe	He hath a sparth of twenti pound of wighte.	He hath a sparth of twenty pound of weight.'
guessing (Fr. *diviner*)	Thus was the halle ful of divynynge,	So the hall buzz'd with gainsaying and surmise
	Longe after that the sonne gan to springe.	A long time since the sun began to rise.
	The grete Theseus that of his sleep awaked	Great Theseus, tho' soon awak'd was he
	With menstralcye and noyse that was maked,	By reason of the noise and minstrelsy,
palace	Held yit the chambre of his paleys riche,	Still kept his room in royal privacy
	Til that the Thebane knyghtes, bothe i-liche	Until the Theban knights (both equally
alike	Honoured, weren into the paleys fet.	Esteem'd and honour'd) reach'd the palace-gate.
	Duk Theseus was at a wyndow set,	Duke Theseus at the palace-window sate,
	Arrayed right as he were a god in trone.	In raiment like a thronèd deity,
soon	The peple preseth thider-ward ful sone	The people pressing thitherward to see
	Him for to seen, and doon him reverence,	Him well and early, do him reverence,
commands	And eek herkne his hest and his sentence.	And hearken to his orders and sentence.
	An heraud on a skaffold made an hoo,[2]	A herald on a scaffold made a *Ho!*

[1] Vide Lycurge's portrait, p. 70.

[2] Ho! an interjection meaning Stop! It is the origin of the old 'Oyez!' now fallen into 'O yes!' among town-criers; of the carter's 'Whoa!' to his horse. And there may be in it a clue to the Australian call of 'Coo-ee!' as a sound that travels farthest.

GLOSSARY.		
	Til al the noyse of the peple was i-do;	Till all the people's noise was done, and so,
	And whan he sawh the peple of noyse al stille,	When he perceived the mass of men was still
shewed	Thus schewede he the mighty dukes wille.[1]	Thus he announc'd the great Duke's sovereign will.
	'The lord hath of his heih discrecioun	'My Lord hath of his high discretiòn
	Considered, that it were destruccioun	Considered, that it were destructiòn
	To gentil blood, to fighten in the gyse	To gentle blood, to tourney in the guise
	Of mortal bataille now in this emprise;	Of mortal battle in this enterprise.
arrange	Wherfor to schapen that they schuln not dye,	Wherefore, to guard that none of them shall die,
	He wol his firste purpos modifye.	He will his earlier purpose modify.
	No man therfore, up peyne of los of lyf,	No man therefore, on pain of loss of life,
	No maner schot, ne pollax, ne schort knyf	No manner of shot, nor pole-axe, nor short knife
	Into the lystes sende, or thider brynge;	Into the lists shall bring, nor thither send.
stab	Ne schorte swerd for to stoke, with poiute bytynge	No short sword with a point or biting end
	No man ne drawe, ne bere by his side.	No man shall draw nor carry at his side.
	Ne noman schal unto his felawe ryde	And no man with his fellow-knight shall ride
	But oon cours, with a scharpe ygrounde spere;	More than one course with lances sharply ground.
spear	Foyne if him lust on foote, himself to were.	Fence if he will, on foot, to 'scape a wound.
comes to grief.	And he that is at meschief, schal be take,	And whosoe'er is wounded they shall take,
slain	And nat slayn, but be brought to the stake,	And not slay, but shall bring unto the stake
ordained	That schal ben ordeyned on eyther syde;	That shall be duly fixed on either side.
	But thider he schal by force, and ther abyde.	Thither by force brought, there he shall abide.
chief	And if so falle, a cheventein be take	And if a chieftain come in such a strait
mate	On eyther syde, or elles sle his make,[2]	On either side—or if he slay his mate,

[1] The lord of the tourney enforced his own conditions. Theseus desired to avoid bloodshed.

[2] Single combat was, of course, the proper order of the tourney. In my *Chaucer for Children* I gave an illustration of the form of attack. The adversaries tilted across a bar or fence according to many MSS. Skill rather than strength was needed. The spear, as in pig-sticking in India, was thrust rather by the weight of the horse than by the weight of the arm. Strength of back and arm was necessary to avoid being bent backward or driven over the crupper: but extreme skill was requisite to hit one's slippery foe with anything like force. They aimed at the head. When both knights hit their mark so that fire flew from their helmets without either falling, it was reckoned a 'handsome course.' The horses were the chief sufferers in these mimic frays; the heavy beasts, protected as they were by a great weight of armour, were often injured. The best-trained dreaded the shock of encounter, and, as we read in Froissart, their restiveness and swerving at the last moment frequently spoiled the 'course,' despite the most violent spurring, to their masters' deep

GLOSSARY.		
	No lenger schal the turneyinge laste.	Thereat no longer shall the tourneying last.
	God spede you; go forth and ley on faste.	God speed you all! go forth and lay on fast.
	With long swerd and with mace fight your fille.	With long sword and with mace fight ye your fill!
	Goth now your way; this is the lordes wille.'	Go your own way—this is the lord his will.'
heaven	The voice of the peple touchede the heven,	The voice of all the people reach'd the sky
a cry in unison	So lowde criede thei with mery steven:	So loud they shouted with a merry cry
	'God save such a lord that is so good,	'God save him, such a lord that is so good:
destruction	He wilneth no destruccioun of blood!'	He will not have a wanton waste of blood!'
	Up goth the trompes and the melodye.	Up go the trumpets and the melody!
	And to the lystes ryt the compainye	Now to the lists ride forth the company
	By ordynaunce, thurghout the cité large,	By ordinance, throughout the city large,
	Hanged with cloth of gold, and not with sarge.	Hung all with cloth of gold, and not with serge.
	Ful lik a lord this noble duk gan ryde,	Full lordly 'gan the noble Duke to ride,
	These tuo Thebanes upon eyther side;	The two knights Theban upon either side:
	And after rood the queen, and Emelye,	After them rode the queen and Emelye:
	And after that another compainye,	And last behind, the other company,
	Of oon and other after here degre.	One and another, after their degree.
passen	And thus they passen thurghout the cité,	Thus they rode thro' the city fair and free,
	And to the lystes come thei by tyme.	And to the lists came, at the given time.
was not	It nas not of the day yet fully pryme,[1]	It was still early, not yet fully prime,
	Whan sette was Theseus ful riche and hye,	When Theseus was richly thron'd on high
	Ypolita the queen and Emelye.	With Hyppolyte the queen, and Emelye,
	And other ladyes in degrees aboute.	And other ladies in the rows about.
	Unto the seetes preseth al the route;[2]	Up to the seats are pressing all the rout!
	And west-ward, thurgh the yates under Mart,	And through the gates of Mars on the west side
Mars also	Arcite, and eek the hundred of his parte,	Arcite, with all his hundred knights, in pride
entered	With baner red ys entred right anoon;	With banner streaming red, is come anon.

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chagrin and disappointment, and the disgust of the lady-loves. The heavy and elaborate armour worn by man and beast increased the shock. It was of doubtful utility, for thrown riders could not rise for the weight of their 'harness;' and suffocation in the dust was a frequent cause of death. The tourney helmet, as may be noticed in museums, had only minute breathing holes; the vizor could not be kept down long.

[1] *Prime*, the conclusion of the first quarter of the day—i.e., 9 o'clock.

[2] The seats were arranged in degrees or steps, as in an amphitheatre.

GLOSSARY.		
	And in that selve moment Palomon	And in the self-same moment, Palamon
	Is, under Venus, est-ward in that place,	Rides beneath Venus, eastward in the place,
manner	With baner whyt,[1] and hardy cheere and face.	With banner white, and hardy mien and face.
seek	In al the world, to seeken up and doun,	In all the world (ransack it as you may),
well-balanced	So evene without variacioun	So equal and complete, as on that day
were not	Ther nere suche compainyes tweye.	Never before were two such companies.
was not, could	For ther nas noon so wys that cowthe seye,	No one was found so captious or so wise
advantage (Fr. *avantage*)	That any had of other avauntage	As to see which side had the better chance.
estate	Of worthines, ne of estaat, ne age,	In rank, or age, or worth, or valiance,
	So evene were they chosen for to gesse.	So even balanced there could be no choice.
guess		
range themselves	And in two renges faire they hem dresse.	So in two ranks were ranged the two convoys.
	Whan that here names rad were everychon,	When all the names were read forth one by one
guile	That in here nombre gile were ther noon,	That in the numbers cheating could be none,
	Tho were the gates schet, and cried was lowde:	Then were the gates shut, and the shout rose loud—
	'Doth now your devoir, yonge knightes proude!'	'Forward! Now do your devoir, young knights proud!'
	The heraldz lafte here prikyng up and doun;	The heralds ceas'd their pricking up and down,
ring	Now ryngen trompes loude and clarioun;	Now clang the trumps out shrill and clarioun.
	Ther is nomore to sayn, but est and west	There is no more delay; but east and west
seriously	In gon the speres ful sadly in arest;	In go the spears, in earnest, into rest;
	Ther seen men who can juste, and who can ryde;	*There* one sees who can joust, and who can ride!
	In goth the scharpe spore into the side.	In goes the sharp spur in the smoking side;
shields	Ther schyveren schaftes upon scheeldes thykke;	*There* shafts are shivering on the bucklers thick!
	He feeleth thurgh the herte-spon[2] the prikke.	(Right thro' the heart-spoon he can feel the prick!)
	Up springen speres twenty foot on highte;	Up spring the lances, twenty foot in height—
go	Out goon the swerdes as the silver brighte.	Out dart the swords like living silver bright—
break to pieces	The helmes thei to-hewen and toschrede;	The helmets that they smash and hew and shred!

[1] Red was the colour of Mars, as white was of Venus. The rivals entered under the protection of the deities they had invoked.

[2] The word can hardly be translated—it means that point of the chest, between the ribs, where, by holding the breath, a spoon-shaped cavity is formed. Who can doubt, in this exciting picture of a tourney, that Chaucer himself had not only seen, but taken part in, such games, as every young soldier's ambition led him to? There is light and colour in every line, and a fierce delight in even the 'stern red streams' of spouting blood, that is absolutely infectious; and every figure may be a reminiscence of real events. One cannot read it without thinking he is really pointing to this man and that.

GLOSSARY.		
	Out brast the blood, with sterne stremes reede,	Out bursts the blood, in stern streams rushing red!
	With mighty maces the bones thay to-breste.	The bones they crush, with mighty maces strong!
began to thrust	He thurgh the thikkeste of the throng gan threste.	*He* thrusts into the middle of the throng!
go	Ther stomblen steedes stronge, and doun goon alle.	*There* the strong steeds are stumbling —down go all!
	He rolleth under foot as doth a balle.	See, he rolls under foot, there like a ball!
enceth	He foyneth on his foot with a tron-choun,	On foot—see!—fencing with his trun-cheoùn!
hustles	And he him hurtleth with his hors adoun.	*He* dashes on him while his horse is down—
since	He thurgh the body is hurt, and sith-then take	*He* through the body is hurt, and now they take
in spite of	Maugré his heed, and brought unto the stake,	Him willy-nilly, and drag him to the stake
agreement (fore-word)	As forward was, right ther he most abyde.	As warning was—and there he must abide.
is led	Another lad is on that other syde.	Now comes another, from the other side!
makes. (Fr. *fait*)	And som tyme doth hem Theseus to reste,	Now Theseus gives them breathing time, to rest
choose	Hem to refreissche, and drinken if hem leste.	Or freshen them, or drink, as may be best.
	Ful ofte a-day han thise Thebanes two	Full oft to-day have met the Thebans two,
woe (harm)	Togidre y-met, and wrought his felawe woo;	Have met and dealt each other many a dreadful blow,
twice	Unhorsed hath ech other of hem tweye.	Twice each unhorsed the other in the fray.
was not	Ther nas no tygre in the vale of Galgopheye,[1]	No tiger in the vale of Gargophey,
little	Whan that hir whelp is stole, whan it is lite,	When her young cub is stolen in her sight,
	So cruel on the hunte, as is Arcite	Is crueller in the chase than is Arcite
	For jelous hert upon this Palomoun:	For jealous heart upon this Palamon!
	Ne in Belmary[2] thern is no fel lyoun,	And in Belmàry is no fell liòn
mad	That hunted is, or is for hunger wood,	Hunted, and mad for hunger in the wood,
	Ne of his prey desireth so the blood,	That seeing his prey so thirsteth for his blood
	As Palomon to slen his foo Arcite.	As Palamon to slay his foe Arcite!
	The jelous strokes on here helmes byte;	The jealous strokes deep in their hel-mets bite.
	Out renneth blood on bothe here sides reede.[3]	Out runneth the red blood, for both do bleed.

[1] This word is variously written in the MSS. There was a town called Galapha in Mauritania Tangitana; or it might be the Vale of Gargaphie (Ovid, *Met.* III. 155, 156).

[2] A Moorish kingdom in Africa.

[3] There is no doubt this rough play, with the mildest prior intentions, often turned before the day was out into ghastly earnest. The combatants, naturally violent, excited by the cries of their ladies and by real passion, panting and heated with efforts, lost command of themselves and their horses, and grew really bloodthirsty. It is shocking that love should have made such cruel foes of two true friends. Not but what it must have been a splendid scene.

GLOSSARY.		
	Som tyme an ende ther is of every dede;	Sometime an end must be of every deed.
	For er the sonne unto the reste wente,	For ere the sun unto his setting went
catch	The stronge kyng Emetreus gan hente	The King Emetrius made a fierce descent
fought	This Palomon, as he faught with Arcite,	On Palamon hard fighting with Arcite,
	And made his swerd depe in his fleissch to byte;	And made his sword deep in his flesh to bite.
taken	And by the force of twenti he is take	Then by the force of twenty he is seiz'd,
	Unyolden, and i-drawe unto the stake.	Dragg'd to the stake, unyielding, unappeas'd.
	And in the rescous of this Palomoun	And in the rescue of this Palamon
	The stronge kyng Ligurges is born adoun;	The mighty king Lycurgus is borne down:
	And kyng Emetreus for al his strengthe	And King Emetrius for all his strength
	Is born out of his sadel a swerdes lengthe,	Is borne out of his saddle a sword's length,
taken	So hit him Palomon er he were take;	So Palamon hit out ere they could take
	But al for nought, he was brought to the stake.	Him—still they brought him to the stake.
	His hardy herte mighte him helpe nought;	His hardy courage now could help him nought,
remain	He most abyde whan that he was caught,	He must abide there idle, being caught,
	By force, and eek by composicioun.	By force of men, and by agreement too.
sorroweth	Who sorweth now but woful Palomoun,	Who grieveth now like Palamon, for wo
go	That moot nomore gon agayn to fighte?	That he no more may rush into the fight?
	And whan that Theseus hadde seen this sighte,	And when Duke Theseus had seen that sight,
	Unto the folk that foughten thus echon	Unto the folk still fighting everyone,
	He cryed, 'Hoo! nomore, for it is doon!	He shouted '*Hoo!* no more, for it is done.
party (to injustice)	I wol be trewe juge, and nought partye.	I will be true judge, nowise partial I.
	Arcyte of Thebes schal have Emelye,	Arcite of Thebes shall have Emelye,
	That hath by his fortune hath hire faire i-wonne.'	That by good fortune hath her fairly won.'
	Anoon ther is a noyse of peple bygonne	And now there is a noise of crowds begun
	For joye of this, so lowde and heye withalle,	For joy of this, so loud and high withall,
	It semede that the listes scholde falle.	It seem'd as though the very lists should fall.

What can fair Venus do now? She wept with disappointment till her tears filled the lists, saying, 'Now I am shamed!' But Saturn comforted her, saying, 'Daughter, hold thy peace: Mars hath his will, his knight hath had the victory, but thou shalt be eased soon.'

	The trompes with the lowde mynstralcye,	The trumpets, and the loudest min strelsy,

Glossary.		
	The herawdes, that ful lowde yolle and cry,	The heralds, that full loudly yell and cry,
are delighted	Been in here wele for joye of daun Arcyte	Blare with a will, for joy of lord Arcite.
wait, little	But herkneth me, and stynteth now a lite,	But hearken, wait, give me a brief respite,
what, there	Which a miracle ther bifel anoon.	—See what a miracle befell anon.
taken off helmet	This fierse Arcyte hath of his helm ydoon,	This fierce Arcite hath now his helm undone,
	And on a courser for to schewe his face,	And on a courser for to show his face,
	He priked endelonge[1] the large place,	He pricketh endlong up the ample place
	Lokyng upward upon his Emelye;	Looking upward upon his Emelye.
upon	And sche agayn him cast a frendly eyghe,	And she cast down on him a friendly eye
	(For wommen, as to speken in comune,	(For women, speaking in a general way,
	Thay folwen al the favour of fortune)	Follow the favour of good fortune aye).
her manner	And was alle his in cheer, and in his herte.	And seem'd all his in mien, as in his heart.
	Out of the ground a fyr infernal sterte,	Out of the ground the fires infernal dart
	From Pluto sent, at requeste of Saturne,	From Pluto sent, demanded by Saturn.
fear began	For which his hors for feere gan to turne,	Whereat his horse for terror back did turn,
leap	And leep asyde, and foundrede as he leep;	And leapt aside and foundered in his leap;
before, take heed	And or that Arcyte may take keep,	And ere Arcite his flagging seat could keep,
	He pighte him on the pomel of his heed,	He flung him on the pummel of his head
	That in that place he lay as he were deed,	So that upon the earth he lay as dead.
crushed	His brest to-brosten with his sadil bowe.	His breast-bone broken on the saddle-bow,
	As blak he lay as eny col or crowe,	As black he lay as any coal or crow,
run	So was the blood y-ronnen in his face.[2]	So had the dark blood rushed into his face.
borne	Anon he was y-born out of the place	Swiftly they lift and bear him from the place,
	With herte soor, to Theseus paleys.	Sore-hearted, to the palace for relief.
carved (cut)	Tho was he corven out of his harneys,	Then was he cut out of his harness stiff
	And in a bed y-brought ful faire and blyve,	And in a fair bed tended with all skill,
	For he was yit in memory and on lyve,	For he was yet alive, and conscious still,
	And alway crying after Emelye	And always crying out for Emelye.

[1] Endlong. A feat used for display. By spurring a horse on one side, and at the same time holding him tight with a severe bit, he is made to curvet, or advance endlong in short bounds. The horse of Arcite, tired and excited, was not up to the effort, and Arcite was exhausted.

[2] A graphic touch! Chaucer must have seen this, the commones of accidents; the high saddles, sometimes locking the rider in his seat all round, were constructed to retain him in his seat however violent the push: but they were the cause of many an unhappy accident. William the Conqueror died from the same thing—crushing against the saddle-bow.

Duke Theseus came back to the town of Athens in great state and cheer. Were it not for this unlucky accident at the end, there had not been a single mishap; and as the leeches said Arcite would soon be well again, *that* was no such great disaster. None had been actually killed, though many had been grievously wounded: which was very gratifying. For all the broken arms could be mended, and the bruises and cuts healed with salves, and herbs, and charms.

There had even been no discomfiture, for falls did not count as shame, nor was it any disgrace to be dragged to a stake with kicks and hootings, and held there hand and foot all alone whilst one's horse was driven out by the sticks of the grooms. That was no disgrace, for it was not cowardice: and such things *must* happen at a tourney. And so all the people made mirth.

The Duke gave beautiful gifts to all the foreign knights, and there were ever so many more shows and feasts for the next three days, and the two mighty kings had the greatest honour paid to them, till all men had gone home to their houses.

So there was an end of the battle for fair Emelye.

But Arcite did not get well so soon as they thought he would. His wound swelled up, and the sore increased at his heart more and more. He was so injured that the balms and the salves gave him no ease, and nature could not do her part. And when nature cannot work, farewell physic! there is no more to be done but carry the man to the churchyard.

In short, Arcite was evidently dying, and he sent for Emelye, who held herself his wife, and for Palamon, his cousin, and they both came to his bedside.

Then he told Emelye all the sorrow that was in his heart, at losing her whom he had loved so dearly; and how he still loved her, and wanted her to pray for him when he was dead.

GLOSSARY.	'Naught may the woful spirit in myn herte	'Naught may the woeful spirit in my heart
one	Declare o poynt of alle my sorwes smerte	Declare of all my bitter sorrows smart
	To you, my lady, that I lovë most;	To *you*, my lady, that I still love most;
	But I byquethe the service of my gost,[1]	But I bequeath the service of my ghost,
	To you aboven every creäture,	To you above all creatures evermore,
endure	Syn that my lyf ne may no lenger dure.	Since my poor life will now, ere long, be o'er.
pains	Allas, the woo! allas, the peynes stronge	Alas, the woe! alas, the trials strong,
suffered	That I for you have suffred, and so longe!	That I for you have borne—and, ah, so long!
death	Allas, the deth! allas, myn Emelye!	Alas, to die! alas, mine Emelye!
separating	Allas, departyng of our compainye!	Alas, that we so soon part company!

[1] The old word *ghost* cannot here be translated. Neither 'soul' nor 'spirit' gives the grim unearthly touch of Chaucer's meaning. Arcite's perfect faithfulness, even in death, so that being no more a man he still will yield her the service of his bodyless spirit, is a transcendent description of mediæval feelings of honour. There are various sentiments in other Chaucer-poems which correspond. In the *Parliament of Fowls* the Dove repudiates the notion of ceasing to love even when the beloved one is obdurate till death, or even when she is dead.

Glossary.		
	Allas, myn hertes queen! allas, my wyf!	Alas, my heart's one queen! alas, my wife!
	Myn hertes lady, endere of my lyf!	Ah, my heart's lady, ender of my life!
ask	What is this world? what asken men to have?	What is life worth? what do men yearn to have?
	Now with his love, now in his colde grave	Now with his darling—now in his cold grave,
any	Allone, withouten eny compainye!	Alone, alone, and with no company!
foe	Farwel, my swete foo! myn Emelye![1]	Farewell, my sweet foe—farewell, Emelye,
	And softe tak me in youre armes tweye,	And softly take me in your arms to-day
two		
hearken	For love of God, and herkneth what I seye.	For love of God, and listen what I say.
	I have heer with my cosyn Palamon	I have here with my cousin Palamon
	Had stryf and rancour many a day agon	Had strife and hatred days and years agone
	For love of yow, and for my jelousie.	For love of you, and for my jealousy.
	. . . .	. . . .
	So Jupiter have of my soule part,	So Jupiter have of my soul a part,
	As in this world right now ne knowe I non	As in the whole wide world now know I none
	So worthy to be loved as Palamon,	So worthy to be loved as Palamon,
	That serveth you, and wol don al his lyf.	Who served you well, and will do all his life.
shall	And if that evere ye schul ben a wyf,	Therefore, if ever you shall be a wife,
forget	Foryet not Palamon, the gentil man.'	Forget not Palamon, that noble man.'
began to fail	And with that word his speche faille gan,	And with that word his speech to fail began,
	For fro his feete up to his brest was come	For from his feet up to his breast was come
	The cold of deth, that hadde him overnome.[2]	The cold of death, that hath him overcome.
already	And yet moreover in his armes two	And now moreover, in his arms at last
gone	The vital strengthe is lost, and al ago.	The vital strength is lost, and all is past.
without	Only the intellect, withouten more,	Only the intellect, all clear before,
	That dwellede in his herte sik and sore,	That lingered in his heart so sick and sore,
began to fail	Gan fayllen, when the herte felte deth;	Began to falter when the heart felt death
darkened, failed	Dusken his eyen two, and failleth breth.	Then his two eyes grew dark, and faint his breath,
	But on his lady yit caste he his eye;	But on his lady yet cast he his eye;
	His laste word was—*Mercy, Emelye.*	And his last word was—'*Mercy, Emelye.*'
ther as, whither	His spiryt chaungede hous, and wentë ther	His spirit changed houses, and went whither
	As I cam nevere, I can nat tellen wher.	I cannot tell, as I came never thither.

He was dead.

Emelye was carried away from Arcite, fainting; and the sorrow she felt is

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[1] Tyrwhitt's and Bell's editions read, 'Farwel, my swete, farwel, myn Emelye!'

[2] Tyrwhitt. *Overnome* is participle past of *overnimen* (Sax.), to overtake. The following, and the sixth line further on, are also Tyrwhitt's reading.

more than I can tell. Day and night she wept, for she had learned to love Arcite as much as if he had been already her husband, so that she was nigh to dying.

All the city mourned for him, young and old. Theseus and Palamon, and everybody was filled with grief. Never had there been such sorrow.

Theseus had a splendid bier made, for Arcite to be burned according to the custom, with the greatest honours. Huge oak trees were cut down on purpose to burn on his pile. Arcite's body was covered with cloth of gold, with white gloves on his hands, his sword by his side, and a wreath of laurel on his head. His face was uncovered, so that all the people might see him, when he was carried forth from the great hall of the palace.

Theseus ordered that Arcite should be burned in that very grove where Palamon and Arcite had first fought for love of Emelye, on that sweet May morning a year ago. So the funeral pile was raised in that grove.

Three beautiful white horses, covered with glittering steel harness and the arms of Arcite, bore all his armour and weapons before him to the spot.

The whole city was hung with black, and the noblest Greeks in the land carried the bier. Duke Theseus, and his old father Egeus, and Palamon, walked beside it, carrying in their hands golden cups, full of milk and wine and blood, to throw upon the pile. Then came Emelye, weeping, with fire in her hand, as the custom was, wherewith to set light to the pile.

With great care and ceremony the wood and straw were built up around the body, so high that they seemed to reach to the sky, and cloth of gold and garlands of flowers were hung all round it.

Poor Emelye fainted when she set fire to the pile, in the course of the funeral service, for her grief was more than she could bear. As soon as the fire burned fast, perfumes and jewels were flung in, and Arcite's shield, spear, and vestments, and the golden cups. Then all the Greeks rode round the fire to the left, three times shouting, and three times rattling their spears; and three times the women cried aloud.

And when all was over, Emelye was led home; and there were curious ceremonies performed, called the lykewake, at nightfall.

Long afterwards, Theseus sent for Palamon. The mourning for Arcite was over in the city, but Palamon came, still wearing his black clothes, quite sorrowful.

Then Theseus brought Emelye to Palamon, and reminded them both of Arcite's dying words. It was not natural, he said, that grief should endure for ever. The hardest pain ends at last, the strongest must give way, life itself ends.

GLOSSARY.		
	Lo the ook, that hath so long a norischynge	Lo, the oak, that hath so slow a nourishing
	Fro tymë that it gynneth first to springe,	From that time when it 'ginneth first to spring,
	And hath so long a lyfe, as we may see,	And hath so long a life, as we may see,
	Yet, atte lastë, wasted is the tree.	Yet at the last, a-wasted is the tree.
hard	Considereth eek, how that the hardë stoon	Consider too, how that the hardest stone

GLOSSARY.		
tread	Under oure feet, on which we trede	Under our feet, where feet have t
go	and goon,	and gone,
lieth, way	Yit wasteth it, as it lith by the weye.	Yet it decayeth, lying by the road
	The brode ryver som tyme wexeth dreye.	The river drieth up, however broa
disappear	The grete townes seen we wane and wende;	The greatest towns, we see them w and wend.
	Then may ye see that al thynge hath an[1] ende.	Thus may ye see that all things h an end.
	Of man and womman sen we wel also	Of man and woman also, well we k
	That nedeth in oon of thise termes two.	That needs must be, in one of terms two,
	This is to seyn, in youthe or elles age	That is to say, in Youth, or else in.
	He moot ben deed, the kyng as schal a page.	All have to die, the king like the page.
	Som in his bed, some in the deepë see,	Some in their beds, some in the he sea,
	Som in the largë feld as men may se.	Some in the great green fields, a may see.
same	Ther helpeth naught, al goth that ilke weye.	There is no help, all goeth the s way.
see, (Ger. sehen)	Thanne may I seyn that al this thing	Thus may we say ev'n sorrow n
die	moot deye.	decay.

He took Emelye's hand and placed it in the hand of Palamon, adding—

	I rede that we make of sorwes two	I purpose that we make, of sor two,
One	O parfyt joye lastyng evere mo.	One perfect joy, that lasteth ever

Then Palamon and Emelye were married, and they lived happy ever aft

welfare	For now is Palamon in alle wele,	For now this Palamon hath all wealth,
health	Lyvynge in blisse, in richesse, and in hele;	Living in bliss, in riches, and health;
	And Emelye him loveth so tendrely,	And Emelye loveth him so tende
nobly	And he hire serveth al so gentilly,	And he doth cherish her so faithf
there, between	That nevere was ther no word hem bitweene	That all their days no thought had again
affliction	Of jelousye, or any other teene.	Of jealousy, nor any other pain.
	Thus endeth Palamon and Emelye,	Thus endeth Palamon and Emely
fair	And God save al this fayre compainye.	And God save all this kindly comp

HERE ENDS THE 'KNIGHT'S TALE.'

NOTES BY THE WAY.

[The outline of the foregoing Tale was borrowed by Chaucer from Boccac 'Theseida:' but the treatment and conception of character are wholly his o It is a common and foolish thing to say of the *Knight's Tale* that with

[1] Bell's edition.

its merits the two principal actors, Arcite and Palamon, are very much alike, and constantly may be mistaken for each other. It seems to me that such a remark is a proof of not having read the tale, for the characters of the two men are almost diametrically opposed, and never does one act or speak as the other would do.

Notice, therefore, the striking contrast all through the story between the characters. From the first, Arcite in the prison is seen to be cooler and more matter-of-fact than Palamon, whose violent nature suffers earliest from imprisonment, mentally, perhaps morally; and whom we find pacing restlessly about, and ceaselessly bemoaning his fate, while Arcite is probably sitting still in philosophic resignation.

Palamon is clearly a man of violent, uncontrolled passions—reckless, even rash, and frantically jealous. Arcite's is by far the stronger mind—wise, clever, cool, but quite as brave and fervent as his friend, a fatalist, strong in his firm philosophy, which Palamon rejects as vain, perhaps mischievous. Every incident brings out their character in strong relief. To Palamon it is given to see Emelye first. He mistakes her for Venus, and prays to her as such—his mind being probably slightly disordered by the privations of mediæval prison life, as a mind so excitable would soon become. Arcite recognises her instantly as a woman, and claims her calmly. Palamon 'flies out,' reproaches him bitterly, violently, with the term most abhorrent to the chivalrous spirit of the time—'false.' Arcite answers with passion, but he is matter-of-fact in the midst of it, reminding his friend how little consequence it is to either of them, for both are perpetual prisoners; and he can even wind up with a touch of humour, quoting the two fighting dogs and the kite.

The release of the two knights is significant. Arcite, the fatalist, would possibly not have tried the *ruse* which freed Palamon. He escapes his fate by a chance. Palamon by an effort of his own.

On his release from prison, Arcite follows out successfully a most difficult *rôle*, concealing his identity in the midst of Theseus' court, and in the agitating presence of his lady, at the risk of his life—*for years*: a stratagem requiring constant *sang-froid* and self-control, which would have been as impossible to Palamon, as mistaking a beautiful woman for a divine vision would have been to Arcite. He does not forget Palamon during this time, though powerless to help him. He is unselfish enough to pray Juno for him, in his soliloquy in the wood.

At the meeting of the rivals in the wood, Palamon, mastered at once by rage, bids Arcite fight with him, that instant, regardless of his (Palamon's) being unarmed: he fears nothing, he only wants to fight. Arcite, also furious, can nevertheless see the common-sense side of the affair, and the need for fair play and proper accoutrements; and enumerates very reasonably the arms and other necessaries he will bring Palamon, including (so matter-of-fact is he) *food and bedding for the night.*

When the combatants are discovered in their illegal and unwitnessed fight, Palamon does not fear death. He is only anxious that, whether he be dead or alive, Arcite shall not have Emelye; and reiterates his entreaty that Arcite may be slain too—before or after, he doesn't care which, as long as he *is* slain.

Palamon's intense jealousy, which could face death cheerfully, but not the yielding up of his beloved to another man, and his anxiety that Arcite should not survive him, are of course less ignoble than they seem if viewed in the light of the times. It was this same jealousy which prompted him to betray Arcite as soon as he got the chance—forgetting that Arcite had not betrayed *him*, the day before, when he was in his power. But Chaucer himself once or twice refers to his mind being unhinged—'wood for love'—which claims our forbearance.

It is also noteworthy that Palamon entreats *Venus* for success, for he can think of nothing but his love: Arcite thinks it more prudent to address *Mars*,

since he has got to win Emelye by fight—he has *considered* the question, you see; and it is therefore (I think) that the preference is given to Palamon in marrying Emelye, because society so exalted the passion of love in those days, while Arcite is made to suffer for his very prudence, which *might* argue a less absorbing passion.

It was a master-thought to make Arcite die by an accident, so that neither of the rivals vanquished the other, and Palamon escapes the possible reproach of winning his happiness by slaying his friend.

The sympathy, however, remains with Arcite. His character is beautifully developed. It is not inconsistent with his power of self-control and brave heart, noble throughout, that he is able to make such a sacrifice on his death-bed as to give Emelye to Palamon. It is a sign of forgiveness of Palamon, who, at the point of death, showed no such generosity; and the greatness of the sacrifice must be estimated by remembering the mediæval view of love and love matters.

I do not think that Palamon could have done that, any more than he could have concealed his identity in Theseus' Court.

One last suggestion. As Van Eyck's pictures are crowded with incident, so mediæval story is decked with quaint touches, and personal allusions, constantly bearing a double meaning.

Chaucer has given no portraits of Palamon and Arcite, whose characters are so clear and forcible all through the tale, that some physical description is sorely needed: unless it is allowable to take the kings Emetrius and Licurge as their representatives. The portraits of the two sovereigns fit singularly well the fierce, passionate nature of Palamon, and the cooler but nobler one of Arcite.

Again, the *appearance* of Licurge (taken as Palamon's portrait) is very characteristic. His eye is fierce, his get-up is mighty, barbaric, bizarre; but Emetrius (Arcite) appears in a much more regular way. Licurge mounts a chariot drawn by bulls—Emetrius rides on horseback, like an ordinary knight. Licurge is enveloped in a bear's hide—Emetrius is properly caprisoned.

Certain as I have always been that the minute descriptions of two dummy kings were not minute without a purpose, their portraits are likely to represent not only the two rivals, otherwise mere shadows unprecedentedly thrown on the mind's eye for form and colour, but real personages. It is said that Henry of Derby, son of John of Gaunt, 'bore him well' at the tourney held in London in 1386.[1] Henry was 25 in 1386, the age attributed to Emetrius. The son of a fair mother (see *Boke of Duchesse*), his visage is not inconsistent: and the flattery would have been politic as well as natural. The tale is supposed to have been written about 1387.

The Earl of Mar, who was killed in a tilt in the reign of Richard II., may, on the other hand, be indicated by Emetrius.

But the eagle, as well as the lion, continually occurs as the royal badge, both white and coloured. The white bulls and great white dogs which accompany Lycurge (? Palamon) are not traceable to any distinguished tilter who might have been noted by Chaucer: but the white bull is likely to have indicated about 1390 descent from the Neville family; the white dog was also a Neville badge.]

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[1] Stowe.

THE CLERK'S TALE.

GLOSSARY.	WHAN that the Knight hadde thus his tale i-told	Now when the good Knight thus his tale had told,
was not (he was)	In al the route nas ther yong ne old,	In all the group there was nor young nor old
	That he ne seyde it was a noble story,	But said it was a very noble story,
	And worthi to be drawen in memòry.	And worth remembering—full of game and glory.
everyone	And namely the gentils everichoon.	The gentlefolk in chief their praises give.
laughed	Our Hoste tho' lowh and swoor, 'So moot I goon,	Our Host laugh'd loudly, swearing 'As I live!
mail (Fr. *malle*)	This gooth right wel: unbokeled is the male:[1]	This goes right well! unbuckled is the mail!
	Let se now who schal telle another tale.'	Let's see now who shall tell another tale.'
	. . . . .	. . . . .
Oxford	Sir Clerk of Oxenford,' our hòste sayde,	'Sir Clerk of Oxford,' then our landlord said,
	'Ye ryde as stille and coy as doth a mayde[2]	'You ride as shy and quiet as a maid
	Were newe spoused, syttyng at the bord;[3]	Newly espous'd, who sits beside the board;
	This day ne herde I of your mouth a word.	All day we have not had from you a word.
sophism	I trow ye study aboute som sophyme.	I guess, some subtle lore you're studying.
	But Salomon saith, everythyng hath tyme.	But Solomon says there's time for everything.
be	For Goddis sake as beth of better cheere,	Prithee, rouse up, and be of better cheer,
study	It is no tyme for to stodye hiere.'	It is no time for your deep studies here.'

'Do not give us a sermon, or something so learned that we cannot understand it.'

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[1] The French word *malle* applies to a box rather than a bag: but the old English word *mail* still refers to the locked bag of transit. The old French *male* was used for a great budget.

[2] Students then entered the university at a far younger age than at the present day, almost indeed when boys now enter the public schools, so that the Clerk of Oxford may have been but a boy, which would account for his diffident demeanour: yet his education and knowledge might warrant mine host's fear of his being too learned for them.

[3] Table: a board upon trestles.

Glossary.		
	'Spekith so playn at this tyme, we yow praye, That we may understonde that ye saye.'	'Speak to us very plainly, now, we pray, That we may understand the whole you say.'

This worthy Clerk answered pleasantly, 'Host, I am under your orders, so I will obey you, as far as is reasonable.'

	'I wil yow telle a tale, which that I Lerned at Padowe of a worthy clerk, As provyd by his wordes and his werk. He is now deed and nayled in his	'I'll tell you now a story that I learnt At Padua, from a most worthy clerk, As proved by all his words and all his work. Now he is dead, and nailéd in his
coffin	chest,	chest,
give	Now God yive his soule wel good rest! Fraunces Petrark,[1] the laureat poete,	I pray to God to give his spirit rest! Francis Petrarch, the poet laureate,
was named	Highte this clerk, whos rethorique swete	This clerk was call'd, whose rhetoric sweet did late
Italy	Enlumynd al Ytail of poetrie,	Illume all Italy with poetry,
	As Liniàn[2] did of philosophie,	As Liniàn did with philosophy,
law	Or lawue, or other art particulere; But deth, that wol not suffre us duellen here,	And law, and other noble arts as well; But death, that will not suffer us here to dwell,
eye	But as it were a twyncling of an ye, Hem bothe hath slayn, and alle schul we dye.'	But, as it were, a twinkling of an eye, Hath slain them both, and we, too shall all die.'

Part I.

To the west of Italy there is a territory called Saluces,[3] which once belonged to a marquis very much beloved by all his people. They all obeyed and respected him, both lords and commoners, and he was very happy.

Besides, he was the noblest born of any one in Lombardy—handsome, and strong, and young—courteous to all, and discreet enough, except in some things where he was not quite perfect! and his name was Walter.

The worst fault of him was the careless sort of life he led. He did nothing but hunt, and hawk, and amuse himself, instead of attending to more serious duties. This made his people very sorry, and they thought if Walter had a wife he would get more steady, and not waste his time so sadly.

One day all his people went in a great crowd to see him; and the wisest one among them said—'O noble marquis, your goodness gives us courage to come to you and tell you what we want. Do not be angry, but deign to listen to us, for we all love you. The only thing needed to make us quite happy is for you to

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[1] These are the lines on which the supposition is based that Petrarch and Chaucer had met. The *Clerk's Tale* was probably written in 1375, shortly after Petrarch's death, and two years after hearing it from Petrarch's own lips; or about 1379, after his second visit to Lombardy. Petrarch himself asserts that he learnt the tale by heart *for the express purpose of telling it to friends:* and Chaucer's translation from Petrarch's MS. version is likely to have been made when the meeting, or the new visit to Lombardy, set his mind to work on the Italian story. See Table of Events.

[2] 'Joannes of Lignano, near Milan, a then illustrious canonist and natural philosopher, who flourished about 1370.'

[3] Saluzzo, a marquisate near Mount Viso: Lat. Vesulus.

marry. Consider, if death should break off your noble line, how we should suffer under a strange successor! Though your green youth flower as yet, age creepeth in always, still as a stone. Hear us, then; bow your neck under that blissful yoke of sovereignty, not service, which men call wedlock. And we will choose you a wife in a short space of time, born of the best and gentlest blood ——'

Walter listened, and then answered—'My dear people, you ask a great sacrifice from me, for I enjoy my liberty: I don't want a wife. But if it makes you any happier, I will try and get one as soon as I can. As for choosing me one, pray don't. Let me alone in choosing of my wife: that charge upon my own back I will bear. Only remember, that when I am married, ye shall not quarrel with my choice. For since I consent to give up my freedom to please you, you must pay such honour to my wife, whoever she may be, as though she were an emperor's daughter.'

All the people promised they would be quite content with any wife he liked, for they were so much afraid he would not marry at all if they didn't.

Then, to make quite sure, they begged him to fix exactly the day when the wedding should take place, and he did so, promising to get everything ready, according to their request. And the people thanked him on their knees and went away.

PART II.

Now, near the marquis's palace, there was a village of poor labouring people.

GLOSSARY.

poor	Among this pore folk there dwelt a man,	Among the poorer folk there dwelt a man,
	Which that was holden porest of hem alle:	And he was held the poorest of them all.
	But heighe God som tyme sende can	But God Almighty, when He wills it, can
	His grace unto a litel oxe stalle.[1]	Send grace unto a little ox's stall.
thorpe (village)	Janicula men of that throop him calle.	Janicle all the villagers him call.
	A doughter had he, fair y-nough to sight,	A daughter had he, fair, and without blame,
was called	And Grisildes this yonge mayden hight.	Griselda was this fair young maiden's name.
	But for to speke of hir vertuous beauté,	But if all maidenly virtues beauteous be,
one	Than was sche oon the fayrest under the sonne:	Then was the maid the fairest under the sun;
	For porely i-fostered up was sche,	So humbly nurtur'd in her home was she,
run	No licorous lust was in hir body ronne:	No greedy wants seem'd in her thoughts to run.
	Wel ofter of the welle than of the tonne[2]	For oftener of the well than of the tun

[1] A delicate allusion to Him who was born in a manger.

[2] The tun was the wine-cask: the well provided a cheaper beverage.

Glossary.		
because	Sche dronk, and for sche wolde vertu please,	She drank, and as a good life did her please,
	Sche knew wel labour, but noon ydel ease.	She knew what work was—never idle ease.
	But though this mayden tender were of age,	But though this maiden was as yet so young,
breas girlhood	Yet in the brest of her virginité	Under her girlish innocence there lay
mature, serious	Ther was enclosed rype and sad corrage;[1]	A brave and serious spirit, ever strong;
love	And in gret reverence and charité	And with good heart she laboured day by day
	Hir olde pore fader fostered sche;	To tend and help her father, poor and grey.
fle	A fewe scheep spynnyng on the feld sche kepte.	Some sheep while spinning in the fields she kept,
would not be	Sche nolde not ben ydel til sche slepte.	For never was she idle till she slept.
came	And when sche hom-ward com, sche wolde brynge	And she would often, as she homeward sped,
bring		
worts	Wortis or other herbis tymes ofte,	Bring with her herbs and cresses gathered there,
chop, boil	The which sche schred and seth for her lyvynge,	Which for a meal she fain would seethe and shred.
living		
	And made hir bed ful hard, and nothing softe.	Hard was her bed and frugal was her fare,
ever, supported	And ay sche kept hir fadres lif on lofte	Keeping her father with untiring care,
	With every obeissance and diligence,	And all obedience, and all diligence
father's	That child may do to fadres reverence.	That child can give to filial reverence.

On this poor hard-working Griselda, the marquis Walter had often cast his eyes when he happened to pass her while hunting. And when he looked at her it was with no foolish thoughts, but with serious admiration for her virtue. He had never seen any one so young who was so good, and he resolved that if ever he married anybody he would marry her.

So, after the people's visit, according to his promise to them, Walter began to prepare beautiful dresses and jewels, brooches and rings of gold, and everything proper for a great lady. And the wedding-day arrived, but no one had seen any bride, or could guess where she was to come from!

At last all the feast was ready, all the palace beautifully adorned, upstairs and downstairs—hall and chambers. The noble guests arrived who were bidden to the wedding—lords and ladies richly arrayed—and still there was no bride!

The marquis made them all follow him into the village, to the sound of music.

Now, Griselda, who knew nothing of all this, went that morning to fetch water from the well; and she heard say that this was to be the marquis's wedding-day.

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[1] *Corage* is used in several senses: impulse (as in the opening lines of the Prologue), feeling, or disposition may be implied. The word is derived from the Latin *cor*, the heart.

So she hastened home, and thought to herself she would get through her work as fast as she could, and try to see something of the sight.

'I will stand with the other girls at the door,' she said to herself innocently, 'and I shall see the new marchioness, if she passes by this way to the castle.'

Just as she crossed the door, the marquis came up, and called her.

Griselda set down her water-cans beside the door in an ox's stall,[1] and, dropping on her knees,[2] waited for the great lord to speak.

The marquis said gravely, 'Where is thy father, Griselda?' and Griselda answered humbly, 'He is all ready here,' and hurried in to fetch him.

Then the marquis took the poor man by the hand, saying, 'Janicula, I shall no longer hide the wish of my heart. If you will consent, I will take your daughter for my wife before I leave this house. I know you love me, and are my faithful liegeman. Tell me, then, whether you will have me for your son-in-law?'

This sudden offer so astonished the poor man that he grew all red, and abashed, and trembling. He could say nothing but—'My lord, it is not for me to gainsay your lordship. Whatever my lord wishes.'

GLOSSARY.

yet	'Yit wol I,' (quod this markys softely,)	'Yet,' said the marquis, softly, 'fain would I
	'That in thy chambre, I and thou	That in thy chamber I and thou
meeting, knowest thou	and sche Have a collacioun, and wostow why?	and she Confer together—dost thou wonder why?
	For I wol aske if that it hir wille be	For I would ask her whether she will be
according to	To be my wyf, and reule hir after me;	My wife—and rule herself to pleasure me;
done	And al this schal be doon in thy presence,	And in thy presence all things shall be said:
hearing	I wol nought speke out of thyn audience.'	Behind thy back no contract shall be made.'

And while the three were talking in the chamber all the people came into the house without,[3] and wondered among themselves how carefully and kindly she kept her father. But poor Griselda, who had never seen such a sight before, looked quite pale. She was not used to such grand visitors.

This is what the marquis said to her.

'Griselda, it pleases your father and me that I should marry you, and I suppose you will not be unwilling.[4] But first I must ask you, since it is to be done

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[1] See note [5] below.

[2] The courtsey of modern times is all that remains of the old custom of kneeling.

[3] The house without. In these early times, dwelling-places were usually built within a court. The court was, among the poor, a spot enclosed by a hedge or fence of sticks, and often a dry ditch; in the middle of this enclosure or house, the *hall* in which they lived stood—a mere covered room. The chamber or *bower*, for sleeping and privacy, was a second erection within the court; but, in the case of so poor a man as Janicula, probably there was but one covered room, hall *or* chamber, used for any purpose of shelter. So when the guests came into the *house* without, the enclosure is meant, within which a single hut stood, built of planks. Janicula's ox (used for draught, as now in Italy) inhabited the hut with them, and Griselda sets down her can in the stall when she enters the hut.

[4] On the Continent, even at the present day, the bride is *expected* to assent to the bridegroom chosen by her parents. Walter treated Griselda with especial consideration

in such a hurry, will you say yes now, or will you think it over? Are you ready to obey me in all things when you are my wife, whether I am kind to you or not? and never to say no when I say yes—either by word or by frowns? Swear that, and I will swear to marry you.'.

Wondering at all this, and trembling with fear, Griselda answered—

'My lord, I am quite unworthy of the great honour you offer me; but whatever my lord wishes I will consent to. And I will swear never, so far as I know, to disobey you—not even if you wish to kill me, though I don't want to die.'

'That is enough, my Griselda,' said Walter, and he went gravely out at the door, and showed her to the people. 'This is my wife, who stands here,' he said: 'honour and love her, whoever loves me.'

Then, so that she might not enter his castle in her poor gown, he bade all the gentlewomen robe her at once in beautiful clothes; and though these smart ladies did not much like touching the old clothes she had on, still they stript them all off her, and clad her all new and splendidly, from head to foot.

Then they combed and dressed her hair, which was quite loose and disarranged, and with their delicate fingers they placed a crown on her head, and covered her with jewels, great and small. They hardly knew her, so beautiful she looked when she was thus richly attired.

The marquis put a ring on her finger, which he had brought on purpose, and set her on a snow-white horse; and she was conducted, with great rejoicings, to the palace, where the day was spent in feasting and merriment till the sun set.[1]

In short, heaven so favoured the new marchioness, that in a little time you would never have guessed she was of so humble birth; she might have been brought up in an emperor's hall, and not in a hut with oxen. The people who had known her from her childhood could hardly believe she was Janicle's daughter, she was so changed for the better.

Moreover, her virtue and gentle dignity made her beloved by everybody, so that her fame was spread throughout all the country, and people even took long journeys to come and look upon her.

Walter had not a fault to find with her. She made him happy by her excellence and her wifely homeliness, just as she made the people happy by her kindness and cleverness in redressing their wrongs.

Part III.

Griselda had a little girl at last, which was a great joy to them both, and to all the people. But Walter had a great longing to put his wife to the test—to see whether she was really as meek and patient and submissive as she seemed.

I know not why he wanted to do this, for he had often tried her in little ways before, and had found her perfect; and for my part I think it is a cruel

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and respect by consulting her. Skeat quotes the legal formula of refusal, *Le roy s'avisera*, to show that Walter's question, 'Wol ye assent, or elles yow avyse?' gave her the chance to refuse.

[1] In the 14th century it was the custom for everybody to go to bed with the sun. They rose in the morning at four or five, had breakfast at six, dinner at ten or eleven, and supper about six.

deed to grieve and torment a wife who does not deserve it, for the sake of needless proof.

Glossary.		
manner	For which this marquis wrought in this manere ;	Wherefore on this wise did the Marquis then :—
	He com aloone a-night ther as sche lay	He came at night, alone there as she lay,
manners	With sterne face, and with ful trouble cheere,	With sternest face, but with a troubled mien,
	And sayde thus, 'Grislid,' quod he, 'that day	And said to her, 'Grisilde' (quoth he), 'that day
	That I yow took out of your pore array,	That I remov'd you in your poor array
estate, high	And putte yow in estat of heigh noblesse,	And plac'd you in a rank of nobleness,
	Ye have not that forgeten, as I gesse.	You have forgotten none of it, I guess.
	'I say, Grisild, this present dignité	'I say, Grisilde, this present dignity,
	In which that I have put yow, as I trowe,	To which I have so rais'd you, as I trow,
	Makith yow not foryetful for to be	Should make you so forgetful now to be.
	That I yow took in pore estat ful lowe,	I found you in a poor estate and low,
any, weal	For eny wele ye moot your selve knowe.	Wherein but little comfort you could know.
	Tak heed of every word that I yow saye,	Take heed of every word I say to you.
person	Ther is no wight that herith it but we twaye.	There is no one that heareth it, but we two.
	'Ye wot your self how that ye comen heere	'Well you remember coming to me here,
	Into this hous, it is nought long ago ;	Into this house, it is not long ago.
	And though to me that ye be leef and deere,	But though, to me, you are most fair and dear,
	Unto my gentils[1] ye be no thing so.	Unto my people round, you are not so.
	Thay seyn, to hem it is gret schame and wo	They say, it is to them great shame and woe
subjection	For to ben subject and ben in servage	That they be subjects, and in servitage
in	To the, that born art of a smal village.	To one who sprang from so mean lineage.
born	'And namely syn thy doughter was i-bore,	'And since thy daughter's birth a while agone
	These wordes han thay spoken douteles.	There is no doubt the murmuring is not less :
	But I desire, as I have doon byfore,	But I desire, as I have ever done,
	To lyve my lif with hem in rest and pees ;	To live my life with them in rest and peace.

[1] The people living on his domain, in serfdom—he was a little king.

GLOSSARY.

case, reckless	I may not in this caas be reccheles ;	Deafness I cannot feign, or recklessness.
	I moot do with thy doughter for the beste,	I must do with thy daughter for the best,—
desire	Not as I wolde, but as my pepul leste.	Not as I will, but as my gentles list.
	'And yit, God wot, this is ful loth to me.	'And yet, God knows, this is a grief to me.
knowledge	But natheles withoute youre witynge	And in the face of your prohibiting
	Wol I not doon; but this wold I,' (quod he,)	I will not do it—but I wish' (quoth he)
	'That ye to me assent as in this thing.	'That you should give consent in such a thing.
working (action)	Schew now your paciëns in your wirching,	Show now your patience by not murmuring.
	That thou me hightest and swor in yon village,	As you did swear and promise in the hut
	That day that maked was oure mariage.'	Wherein my ring was on your finger put.'
	Whan sche had herd al this sche nought ameevyd	When she had heard all this, she never mov'd :
moved	Neyther in word, in cheer, or countenaunce,	Neither in mien, nor word, nor countenance,
aggrieved	(For, as it semede sche was nought agreeved) ;	Seem'd she resentful, nor the deed reprov'd.
	She sayde, 'Lord, al lith in your plesaunce ;	She answered, 'Lord, all lieth in your pleasance.
pleasure (Fr. *obéissance*)	My child and I, with hertly obeisaunce,	My child and I with heart's obedience
Be	Ben youres al, and ye may save or spille	We be all yours : and you may hurt or heal
destroy	Your oughne thing; werkith after your wille.	Your own thing—work then for the common weal.
	'Ther may no thing, so God my soule save,	'Nothing there is (as God my soul shall save)
Seem good	Liken to yow, that may displesen me ;	Which you command me, that displeaseth me.
	Ne I desire no thing for to have,	And there is nothing I desire to have
	Ne drede for to lese, save oonly ye.	Nor dread to lose, at all, but only ye.
	This wil is in myn hert, and ay schal be,	This will is in my heart and ay shall be.
	No length of tyme or deth may this deface,	No length of time, nor death, may this efface,
	Ne chaunge my corràge[1] to other place.'	Nor lead my heart into another place.'
	Glad was this marquis of hir answeryng,	Glad was this marquis at her mild reply.
	But yit he feyned as he were not so.'	But yet he feign'd as tho' he were not so.
looking	Al dreery was his cheer and his lokyng.	All dreary was his mien, as mournfully
	Whan that he schold out of the chambre go.	Out of her chamber he made speed to go.

[1] See note 1, p. 90.

GLOSSARY.

Soon after this, a forlong way or tuo,
He prively hath told al his entente
Unto a man, and unto his wyf him sente.

A maner sergeant was this privé man,
The which that faithful oft he founden hadde
In thinges grete, and eek such folk wel can
Don execucioun in thinges badde;
The lord knew wel that he him loved and dradde.
And whan this sergeant wist his lordes wille,
Into the chamber he stalked him ful stille.

'Madame, (he sayde,) ye moste foryive it me,
Though I do thing to which I am constreynit;
Ye ben so wys, that ful wel knowe ye,
That lordes hestes mowe not ben i-feynit.
Thay mowë wel biwayl it or compleyn it;
But men moot neede unto her lust obeye,
And so wol I, there is no more to seye.

This child I am comaundid for to take.'
And spak no more, but out the child he hente
Dispitously, and gan a chiere make,
As though he wold han slayn it, er he wente.
Grisild moot al suffer and al consente;
And as a lamb sche sitteth meeke and stille,
And let this cruel sergeant doon his wille.

Suspecious was the defame of this man,
Suspect his face, suspect his word also,
Suspect the tyme in which he this bigan.
Allas! hir doughter, that she lovede so,

dreaded — constrained (obliged) — may — made as though — ill-fame — suspicious (Fr. *suspecte*)

Soon after this, a furlong's stretch or two
He privily confided his intent
Unto a man, whom to his wife he sent.

A kind of sergeant was this privy man,
A stern and trusty servant, whom he had
Found faithful in great things, and such folk can
Do execution even in things bad.
He lov'd and fear'd him; for such office made!—
And when the sergeant knew his master's will,
Into her chamber stalk'd he, mute and still.

'Madam' (he said) 'ye must forgive it me
If I perform the deed that is ordained.
Ye are so wise, none better know than ye,
That great lords' orders cannot be restrained.
They may well be regretted and complained
About—but men must needs their rule obey,
And so will I: there is no more to say.

This child I am commanded now to take.'
And spoke no more: but to the babe he leant
And roughly snatch'd—and gesture now did make
As though he would have slain it ere he went.
All this Griseld must suffer, and consent.
And as a lamb she sitteth meek and still
And let this cruel sergeant do his will.

Suspicious of repute was this stern man,
Suspicious in his look, and speech also,
So was the time when he the deed began.
Alas! her baby, that she lovëd so,

GLOSSARY.

believed — Sche wende he wold han slayen it right tho ; — Would he destroy it ere he turned to go ?—

then, nevertheless, sighed — But natheles sche neyther weep ne sikede, Conformyng hir to that the marquis likede. — And yet she did not weep, she was resign'd To all the wishes of her master's mind.

to speak — But atte laste speke sche bigan, And mekely sche to the sergeant preyde, So as he was a worthy gentil man, — To say a few meek words she then began, And for one boon she pitifully pray'd, That as he was a kind and worthy man

might — That she moste kisse hir child er that it deyde. — She might but kiss her baby ere it died.

lap — And in hir barm[1] this litel child schey leyde, With ful sad face, and gan the child to blesse, — And in her lap the little child she laid, With mournful face, and did the baby bless,

began, kiss — And lullyd it, and after gan it kesse. — And lull'd it with how many a soft caress !

And thus sche sayd in hir benigne vois : — And thus she murmur'd in her gentle tone,

'Farwel, my child, I schal the never see ; — 'Farewell, my child, that I no more shall see—

cross (Fr. croix) — But sith I the have marked with the croys, Of thilke fader blessed mot thou be, That for us deyde upon a cros of tre ; — But since I mark'd thee with the cross, my own, Of that kind Father blessèd mayst thou be[2] That crucified died for us on a Tree.

commit to him — Thy soule, litel child, I him bytake, For this night schaltow deyen for my sake.'[2] — Thy soul, O little baby, He shall take. For this night thou wilt perish for my sake.'

I trowe that to a norice in this caas — Surely unto a nurse, in such a case,

ruth — It hadde ben hard this rewthe for to see ; — It had been hard so sad a deed to see.

Wel might a moder than have cryed allas, — Well might a mother then have cried 'Alas !'

But natheles so sad stedefast was sche. — Nathless, so firm and serious was she

That sche endured al adversité, — That she could bear the worst adversity.

And to the sergeant mekely sche sayde, — And in the sergeant's dreadful arms she laid

'Have her agayn your litel yonge mayde. — The child, and 'Take your little maid,' she said.

'Goth now,' (quod sche,) 'and doth — 'Go now,' she saith, 'and do my lord's

order — my lordes heste, But o thyng wil I preye you of your grace, — behest ; But one thing I would pray you, of your grace,

except — That but my lord forbade you atte leste, — Unless my lord forbade it you at least,

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[1] Tyrwhitt.

[2] There is evidently here her mental comparison between a kind father and a cruel one : though she makes no complaint.

Glossary.		
birds, mangle	Burieth this litel body in some place That bestes ne no briddes it to-race.'	Bury the little body in some place Where beasts of prey will harm not nor deface.'
	But he no word will to the purpose saye But took the child and went upon his waye.	But not a word in answer would he say, But took the child, and went upon his way.

He took the babe to the marquis, and told him exactly all that Griselda had said. The marquis certainly showed some little feeling and regret, yet he kept to his purpose, as men will when they are determined. He then bade the sergeant wrap up the child softly and tenderly, and carry it in secret, in a box or the skirt of a garment, to Bologna, where dwelt his sister, Countess of Panik.[1] She would foster it kindly; but whom the child belonged to was to be kept from all men's knowledge.

The sergeant did as he was commanded, and the marquis watched his wife to see if there should be any rebellion in her manner. But she did not change. She was always kind, and loving, and serious, and as busy and humble as ever. Not a word she spoke of the poor baby.

Part IV.

A few years afterwards, Griselda had another child—a little boy. This was still more joy to the people and to Walter than the other baby, because it was the heir.

When the babe was two years old, the marquis took it into his head to tempt again his poor wife. Ah! how needless to torture her! but married men care for no limits when they find a patient wife!

'Wife,' said the marquis, 'I have told you how discontented are the people with our marriage; and since the boy's birth their anger has been greater. Their murmuring destroys all my comfort and courage. They grumble, because when I am dead the blood of Janicle shall succeed to my heritage; and I cannot disregard the words they say! So I think I will serve him as I served his sister; but do not suddenly fly out with grief. Be patient, I beg of you, and command your feelings.'

Griselda answered, sadly and calmly, when she heard this—

	'I have,' quod sche, 'sayd thus, and ever schal,	'I have,' quoth she, 'said this, and ever shall,
will not	I wol no thing, ne nil no thing certayn,	I wish not, nor will wish, it is certain,
please	But as yow list: nought greveth me at al,	But as you choose: I grieve me not at all,
	Though that my doughter and my sone be slayn	Although my daughter and my son be slain
say	At your comaundement: this is to sayn,	At your commandment: nor will I complain

[1] *Panico*, Petrarch; *Panigo*, Boccace. I cannot be sure of the situation of this place, but there is a certain Paganico near Urbino, which is not too far from Bologna to be possibly the place referred to. A river Panara flows between Modena and Bologna.

Glossary.		
	I have not had no part of children twayne,	That I have had no part in children twain,
sickness	But first syknes, and after wo and payne.	But sickness first, and then a bitterer pain.
be, master	'Ye ben oure lord: doth with your owne thing	'Thou art our lord: do, then, with what is thine
ask, advice	Right as yow list: axith no red of me;	E'en as thou wilt: ask not assent of me;—
	For as I left at hom al my clothing	For as I left at home all that was mine
	Whan I first com to yow, right so,' (quod sche,)	When I came first to thee, right so,' quoth she,
	'Left I my wille and al my liberte,	'Left I my will and all my liberty,
you	And took your clothing; wherfor, I yow preye	And took new habits: wherefore, now, I pray
desire	Doth your plesaunce, I wil youre lust obeye.'	Do but thy pleasure, and I will obey.'

'If I knew beforehand what your wish was,' said poor Griselda, 'I would do it without delay; but now that I know your will, I am ready to die if you desire it; for death is nothing compared with your love!'

When the marquis heard that, he cast down his eyes, and wondered how she could endure it all; and he went forth looking very dreary, but in reality he felt extremely pleased.

The ugly sergeant came again, and he took away the little boy: Griselda kissed it and blessed it, only asking that his little limbs might be kept from the wild beasts and birds; but the sergeant promised nothing, and secretly took him with great care to Bologna.

The marquis was amazed at her patience; for he knew that, next to himself, she loved her children best of anything in the world. What could he do more to prove her steadfastness, and faithfulness, and patience? But there are some people who, when they have once taken a thing into their head, will fasten upon it as if they were bound to a stake. So this marquis made up his mind to try his wife still further.

He watched her closely, but never could he find any change in her: the older she grew, the more faithful and industrious she was. Whatever he liked, she liked: there seemed but one will between them; and, God be thanked, all was for the best.

But all this time the slander against Walter spread far and near; and the people said he had wickedly murdered both his children, because his wife was a poor woman. For the people had no idea what had really become of them. And they began to hate Walter instead of loving him, as they had once done, for a murderer is a hateful name.

Still the marquis was so determined to test his wife, that he cared for nothing else.

When Griselda's daughter was twelve years old, Walter sent secretly to Rome, commanding that false letters, seeming to come from the Pope, should be made according to his will. These letters, or 'bulls,' were to give him leave to quit his first wife, for the sake of his people, and marry another woman; but they were none of them really from the Pope: they were all counterfeit and false, made by Walter's order, to deceive Griselda.

The common people did not know the difference between true letters and false; but when the tidings arrived, Griselda was very sorrowful; for she loved Walter best of all things, as he very well knew.

Glossary.		
judge, sad	I deeme that hir herte was ful wo;	Full sure am I her heart was full of wo;
alike, firm	But sche, ylike sad for evermo,	But she, as though serene for evermo,
disposed	Disposid was, this humble creature,	Was ready, in her humbleness of mind,
fortune, to endure	Th'adversite of fortun al tendure.	In all adversity to be resign'd.

Then the marquis sent to the Earl of Panik, who had married his sister, begging him to bring both his children home, openly and in great honour; but no one was to know whose children they were. He was to answer no questions—

should	'But saye the mayde schuld i-wedded be[1]	'But say the maiden should, ere long, be wed
immediately	Unto the Markys of Saluce anoon.'	Unto the Marquis of Saluces so high.'
did	And as this eorl was prayd, so dede he;	And as this earl was pray'd to do, he did,
day-break gone	For at day-set he on his way is goon	And started on his journey speedily
many a one	Toward Saluce, and lordes many oon,	Towards Saluces, with lordly company
	In riche array, this mayden for to guyde,	In rich array, this maiden fair to guide,
	Hir yonge brother rydyng by hir syde.	Her little brother riding by her side.
	Arrayed was toward hir mariage	And this fresh maid was robed for marriage
maiden, gems	This freisshe may, al ful of gemmes clere;	Full of clear gems, in goodly raiment rare;
	Hir brother, which that seven yer was of age,	Her brother, who was seven years of age,
also	Arrayed eek ful freissh in his	Was in his fashion clad all fresh
manner	manere;	and fair;
noblenes	And thus in gret noblesse and with glad chere,	And thus, in splendour, and with joyous air,
their	Toward Saluces shaping her journay,	Towards Saluces following the way,
their	Fro day to day thay ryden in her way.	The cavalcade advances day by day.

Part V.

In order to put the last trial upon Griselda, to the uttermost proof of her courage, the marquis one day, before all the household, said to her in a boisterous way—

certainly, pleasure	'Certes, Grisildes, I had y-nough plesaunce	'Tis true, Griselda, I was once content
	To have yow to my wif, for your goodnesse,	To marry you—because you were so good,
truth, obedience	And for youre trouthe, and for your obeissaunce;	And true, and faithful, and obedient—

[1] It was not uncommon in Chaucer's time for girls to be married at twelve years of age.

GLOSSARY.

lineage,	Nought for your lignage, ne for	Not for your wealth, nor for your
wealth	your richesse;	noble blood;
truth	But now know I in verray sothfast-	Still one thing must be clearly
	nesse,	understood,
am not mistaken	That in gret lordschip, if I wel avyse,	That in this rank and riches men so praise
sundry wise	Ther is gret servitude in sondry wyse.	There is great servitude in many ways.
	'I may not do, as every ploughman	'I may not do as every ploughman
	may;	may:
constrain	My poeple me constreignith for to	My people urge me evermore to
	take	take
	Another wyf, and crien day by day;	Another wife, and clamour day by day.
	And eek the Pope, rancour for to	And now the Pope, their rancour
	slake,	swift to slake,
dare	Consentith it, that dar I undertake;	Gives glad consent to any change I make;
much	And trewely, thus moche I wol yow	And more than that—I need not fear
	saye,	to say—
	My newe wif is comyng by the waye.	My new wife is already on her way.
heart	'Be strong of hert, and voyde anoon	'Be brave, give up your place to her,
	hir place,	make room,
that	And thilke dower that ye broughten	And, see, the dowry that you brought
	me	to me
	Tak it agayn, I graunt it of my grace.	I will restore—my grace confers the boon.
return	Retourneth to youre fadres hous,'	Go back unto your father's house,'
	quod he,	quoth he,
	'No man may alway have prosperité.	'No one can always have prosperity.
advise	With even hert I rede yow endure	With equal spirit suffer weal or woe,
chance	The strok of fortune or of adventure.'	The gifts of chance or luck that come and go.'
	And sche agayn answerd in pacience:	And she replied, with perfect patience:
	'My lord,' quod sche, 'I wot, and	'My lord, I know, and knew alway,'
	wist alway,	quoth she,
	How that bitwixe your magnificence	'Too well, that 'tween your own mag-
		nificence
nobody	And my poverté, no wight can ne	And my great poverty, there cannot
	may	be
undeniable	Make comparisoun, it is no nay;	Comparison at all, and verily
worthy, manner	I ne held me neuer digne in no manere	I held myself unworthy every way
chambermaid	To ben your wif, ne yit your cham-	To be your wife—or servant—for a
	berere.	day.
	'And in this hous, ther ye me lady	'And in this house wherein ye made
	made,	me great
	(The highe God take I for my wit-	(High God my witness, who shall
	nesse,	haply set
cheer	And al-so wisly he my soule glade)	Some coming comfort in my altered state),
held myself	I never huld me lady ne maistresse,	Lady nor mistress never was I yet;
	But humble servaunt to your	But humble servant to the grace I
	worthinesse,	get:

GLOSSARY.		
life	And ever schal, whil that my lyf may dure,	This I shall be, with spirit ever strong,
above	Aboven every worldly creature.	More than all others, yea, my whole life long.
benignity	'That ye so longe of your benignité	'And for your charity in keeping me
nobleness	Han holden me in honour and nobleye,	In dignity and honour day by day
where	Wher as I was not worthy for-to be,	So many years, unworthy though I be,
thank	That thonk I God and yow, to whom I preye	Now thank I God and you, to whom I pray
repay	For-yeld it yow, ther is no more to seye.	That He will all your graciousness repay.
go	Unto my fader gladly wil I wende,	Unto my father cheerfully I wend
	And with him duelle unto my lyves ende.	To dwell with him from now to my life's end.
	'Ther I was fostred as a child ful smal,	'There I was fostered as an infant small,
	Till I be deed my lyf ther wil I lede,	There till I die my life I will lead through,
clean	A widow clene in body, hert, and al:	Dwell as an honest widow, heart and all.
since, maidenhood	For sith I yaf to yow my maydenhede,	For since I gave my girlhood unto you,
	And am your trewe wyf, it is no drede,	And am your wife, most loving and most true,
shield (forbid)	God schilde such a lordes wyf to take,	It were not fitting that a great lord's wife
for, for mate	Another man to housbond or to make.	Should wed another husband all her life.
	'And of your newe wif, God of his grace	'And with your wife to be, God of his grace
	So graunte yow wele and prosperité,	Grant you all welfare and prosperity;
yield	For I wol gladly yelden hir my place,	For I will yield her cheerfully my place,
	In which that I was blisful wont to be.	In which I once so happy used to be;
	For sith it liketh yow, my lord, quod sche,	For since it pleaseth you, my lord,' quoth she,
once	That whilom were al myn hertes reste,	'Who ever were the dearest to my heart,
please	That I schal gon, I wil go whan yow leste.	That I should go, content I will depart.
proffer	'But ther as ye profre me such dowayre	'But when you bid me take again that dower
	As I ferst brought, it is wel in my mynde;	That I first brought, it still is in my mind:
wretched	It were my wrecchid clothes, no thing faire,	It was my wretched clothing, coarse and poor—
	The whiche to me were hard now for to fynde.	Rags that it were not easy now to find.

GLOSSARY.		
	O goode God! how gentil and how kynde	And, O good God! how gentle and how kind
speech	Ye semede by your speche and your visage,	You then seemed, by your words and by your look,
made	That day that maked was our mariage!'	That day whereon the name of wife I took!'

Griselda said no word of reproach to her cruel husband, except one touching remark, which he may have felt as one—

'Love is not old as when that it is new.' (Love is not the same in after years as when it first comes).

Then she appeals to him in a way that must have touched a heart of stone, for she saw no sign of relenting in his face: she does not know how far his brutality will go, and will not be surprised at the last insult.

	'My lord, ye wot that in my fadres place	'My lord, you know that in my father's place
strip	Ye dede me strippe out of my pore wede,	You stript me of my poor attire, for ruth:
attire	And richely me cladden of your grace;	Anew you richly clad me, of your grace.
else	To yow brought I nought elles, out of drede,	And I brought nothing unto you, in truth,
maidenhood	But faith, and nakednesse, and maydenhede;	But honesty, and poverty, and youth.
	And her agayn my clothyng I restore,	And here again your clothing I restore,
	And eek my weddyng ryng for evermore.	And ev'n your wedding-ring for evermore.
remainder	'The remenant of your jewels redy be	'The remnant of your jewels ready be
dare	Within your chambur, dar I saufly sayn.	Within your chamber, I can safely say.
	Naked out of my fadres hous,' quod sche,	With nothing from my father's house,' quoth she,
return	'I com, and naked moot I torne agayn.	'I came, with nothing I shall go away.
follow gladly	Al your pleisauns wold I fulfille fayn;	In all things as you bid I will obey;
intention	But yit I hope it be not youre entente,	But yet I hope you will not let me go
smockless, palace	That I smocles out of your paleys wente.'	Quite as bereft as when I came to you.'

A faint sparkle of human spirit comes into her entreaty—'Ye could not do so dishonest (shameful) a thing:'—

own	'Remembre yow, myn oughne lord so deere,	'Remember yet, my lord and husband dear,
	I was your wyf, though I unworthy were.	I was your wife, though I unworthy were!
girlhood	'Wherfor, in guerdoun of my maydenhede,	'Thus, in requital of the youth I brought,
carry away	Which that I brought, and not agayn I bere,	But never can take back, nor have it more,

Glossary.		
vouchsafe, reward	As vouchethsauf as yeve me to my meede	Give me, I pray, a garment of such sort
smock	But such a smok as I was wont to were.'	As in those days of poverty I wore.'
wear		
smock	'The smok,[1]' quod he, 'that thou hast on thy bak,	'The shift,' he said, 'thou hast upon thy back,
	Let it be stille, and ber it forth with the.'	Let it remain, and bear it forth with thee.'
scarcely, that	But wel unnethes thilke word he spak,	But scarcely that hard word for pain he spake,
compassion	But went his way for routhe and for pité.	And went his way for sorrow and pity.
herself	Byforn the folk hirselven strippith sche,	Before the household all her robes stript she;
head and feet	And in hir smok, with heed and foot al bare,	And in her shift, barefoot and bare of head,
went	Toward hir fader house forth is she fare.	Toward her father's house forth is she sped.
follow her	The folk hir folwen wepyng in hir weyé,	The household follow, tears in every eye,
curse	And fortune ay thay cursen as thay goon;	Bewailing her ill-fortune as they go;
dry	But she fro wepyng kept hir eyen dreye,	But she from weeping kept her own eyes dry,
none	Ne in this tyme word ne spak sche noon.	Nor spake a word to those who murmur'd so.
tidings	Hir fader, that this tyding herd	Her father heard the news awhile
soon	anoon,	ago,
	Cursede the day and time that nature	And sore laments the day that he was born,
shaped, living	Schoop him to ben a lyves creäture.	To be a thing so helpless and forlorn.
	For oute of doute this olde pore man	For ever without doubt the poor old man
suspicion	Was ever in suspect of hir mariage;	Distrusted heartily her altered rank;
believed	For ever he deemede, sith that it bigan,	Believing inly since it first began,
impulse	That whan the lord fulfilled had his corrage,	That when my lord had wearied of his prank,
disparagement	Him wolde think that it were disparage	He would conceive it far beneath his rank
	To his estate, so lowe for to lighte,	To have a low-born wife, however good,
put her away	And voyden hire as sone as ever he mighte.	And rid himself of her whene'er he could.
goeth	Agayns his doughter hastily goth he	Unto his daughter hastily he goes,
	(For he by noyse of folk knew hir comyng),	(For by the noise of crowds he knew her nigh),
coat	And with hir olde cote, as it might be,	And her old garb about her form he throws,

[1] The smock, or shift, was a high garment with long sleeves, often embroidered with black stitchery.

Glossary.		
sorrowfully	He covered hir, ful sorwfully wepynge,	And covers her, with tears and many a sigh,
	But on hir body might he it nought bringe,	But could not draw it round her properly,
coarse, more	For rude was the cloth, and mor of age,	For coarse and shrunk the cloth was —worse for age
many (*viel*)	By dayes fele than at hir mariage.	By many days, than at her marriage.
	Thus with hir fader for a certeyn space	Thus with her father for a certain space
flower	Dwellith this flour of wifly pacience;	Did dwell this flower of wifely patièn̈ce ;
	That neyther by hir wordes, ne by hir face,	And neither by her speech nor by her face,
also, their	Byforn the folk nor eek in her absence,	Before the folk, nor e'en in their absèn̈ce,
showed, done	Ne schewed sche that hir was doon offence ;	Seem'd she to feel that she endured offence.
nor, estate	Ne of hir highe astaat no remembraunce	As far as any living soul could see
	Ne hadde she, as by hir countenaunce.	She had of her past state no memory.

And after all it was scarce any wonder. For in her days of wealth her spirit had always been humble and meek. No dainty fare, no foolish pomp or luxury, no semblance of splendid rank, had she allowed herself; but, ever wise and humble and firm, when reverses came she was ready to bear them.

Men speak of Job's patience; but, though some praise women little enough, no man can be as patient as a woman can—no man be faithful as a woman can.

Part VI.

At last the Earl of Panik arrived, whose fame had been spreading among great and small. The people had all found out that he was bringing them a new marchioness, in such pomp and state, that never before had a like splendour been seen throughout West Lombardy.

The marquis, who had arranged all these things, sent for this poor innocent Griselda; and she came with humble mind and joyful face, and no proud notions in her heart, and knelt before him and asked his will.

'Griselda,' he said, 'my will is that the maiden whom I am to marry be received here as royally as it is possible in my house to be, and that everybody, according to his degree, shall be made thoroughly welcome and happy. I have no woman able to arrange my rooms fully to my liking, and therefore I want you to take everything in hand. You know of old my ways and my tastes; therefore, though your dress *is* ragged and you look very bad, you must do your duties to the very best of your power.'

Griselda answered, 'Not only, lord, am I glad to do anything for you, but I love you enough to work all my days to please you.'

And with that worde sche gan the hous to dighte,	And with that word she 'gan the house to deck,
And tables for to sette, and beddes make:	To set the tables and to make the beds:

begging all the chambermaids to hasten and hurry and shake and sweep smartly; and she, most serviceable of them all, got every chamber and the great hall garnished and adorned.

Glossary.		
forenoon	Abouten undern gan this lord alighte,	Somewhat ere noonday did this earl alight,
two	That with him broughte these noble children tweye;	Who with him brought the unknown children fair,
rich to be seen	For which the peple ran to se that sighte Of hir array, so richely biseye;	And all the people ran to see the sight Of their array, resplendent as they were;
at first	And than at erst amonges hem thay seye	And soon the common thought was whispered there,
he pleased	That Walter was no fool, though that hem leste	That Walter was no fool for being glad
	To chaunge his wyf; for it was for the beste.	To change his wife—a good exchange he had!
deem	For sche is fairer, as thay demen alle,	For she is fairer, as they notice all,
younger	Than is Grisild, and more tendre of age.	Than is Griselda, tenderer of age.

And the throngs of admiring serfs stood making their light remarks, forgetful of the victim of it all, and her undeserved disgrace. They watch the fair bride and the handsome boy beside her, and every moment the marquis seems to get more popular.

unsteady	O stormy poeple, unsad and ever untrewe,	O stormy people, light, and ever untrue,
indiscreet	And undiscret and chaunging as a fane,	And undiscerning—changing as a fane,
noise	Delytyng ever in rombel that is newe,	Delighting in new noise, because 'tis new,
	For lik the moone ay waxe ye and wane.	How like the moon do ye, too, wax and wane!
chattering	Ay ful of clappyng, dere ynough a jane,[1]	Your empty praise, like worthless coin, is vain:
judgment,	Youre doom is fals, your constaunce	False is your judgment, frail your
evil proveth	yvil previth,	constancy,
believeth	A ful gret fool is he that on yow leevith.	Who trusts to you—a full great fool is he.

That is what the graver people in the city said when the populace were gazing up and down, glad for the novelty, to have a new lady in the castle.

Meanwhile Griselda was working busily at everything that was needed for the feast. She was nothing abashed at her clothing, though it was rude and coarse, and somewhat torn besides. She went to the gate with the rest to salute the bride, and hurried back at once to her work.

She received every one cheerfully, and in such a manner that no one had a

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[1] 'A jane is a small coin of Genoa (Janua); the meaning is, your praise is dear enough at a farthing.'—*B.* Or the verse may be taken to mean, the smallest coin is dear enough to you when you are tired of better—for novelty's sake.

fault to find with her; but some of them wondered who this woman was, in such shabby clothes, but who behaved with so much grace and propriety; and many praised her diligence and wisdom.

When all the great lords were about to sit down to supper, Walter called to Griselda, who was working in the hall.

Glossary.		
	In all this menë whilë sche ne stent	Meanwhile she gazed, she ceas'd not to commend
	This mayde and eek hir brother to comende	This girl and boy so well and heartily
civil	With al her herte in ful buxom entente	That no praise other, could her praise amend,
could	So wel that no man couthe hir pris amende,	So kindly meant, and urg'd so honestly:
	But atte laste whar that these lordes wende	But at the last when all these lords went by
	To sitte doun to mete, he gan to calle	To sit at meat, the marquis turn'd to call
	Grisilde as sche was busy in the halle.	Griselda, busy working in the hall.
	'Grisyld,' (quod he,) 'as it were in his play,	'Grisild,' he said to her, as if in play,
do you like	'How likith the my wif and hir beauté?'	'How seems my wife and her fair looks to thee?'
	'Right wel, my lord,' (quod sche,)	'Right well, my lord,' said she, 'for
faith	'for in good fay	in good fay
none	A fairer saugh I never noon than sche.	I never saw a fairer bride than she;
	I pray to God yive hir prosperité;	I pray God give her great prosperity;
	And so hope I that he wol to yow sende	And so I hope that He will ever send
pleasantness	Plesaunce ynough unto vour lyves ende.	You happiness enough to your lives' end.
beseech	'On thing biseke I yow, and warne also,[1]	'One thing I pray of you, and warn beside,
prick	That ye ne prike with no tormentynge	That you goad not with any torturing
	This tendre mayden, as ye han doon mo;	This tender maid—like some you have sore tried;
more (others) fostered, nourishing	For she is fostrid in hir norischinge	For she is nurtured in her upbringing
as I suppose	More tendrely, and to my supposynge	More tenderly—and such a gentle thing
	She couthe not adversité endure,	Might haply not adversity endure
could, poorly	As couthe a pore fostrid creature.'	Like one whose nurture had been hard and poor.'
	And whan this Walter saugh hir pacience,	And when this Walter saw her patientness,
	Hir glade cheer, and no malice at al,	Her cheerful mien, and malice none at all;
offended	And he so oft hadde doon to hir offence,	Though he so oft had tried her more or less,

[1] Skeat; also second line beyond.

GLOSSARY.

steady — And sche ay sad, and constant as a wal,
Continuyng ever hir innocence overal:
This sturdy marquis gan his herte dresse
bring
to pity (rue) wifely — To rewen upon hir wyfly stedefastnesse.

And she still firm and constant as a wall,
Continuing ever her innocence over all:
This sturdy marquis 'gan his heart to chide,
Touch'd by her steadfast faith that never died.

'This is ynough, Grisilde myn,' quod he,
afraid, disappointed — 'Be now no more agast, ne yvel apayed,
goodness — I have thy faith and thy benignité,
essayed — As wel as ever womman was, assayed
poorly — In gret estate, and pourliche[1] arrayed.
Now knowe I, dere wyf, thy stedefastnesse.
kiss — And hir in armes took and gan hir kesse.

'This is enough, Griselda mine,' said he,
'Be no more ill at ease, and fear no more!
I have thy faith and strength and charity
Tempted, as woman never was before,
Both in thy wealth and in thy rags so poor.
Now do I know, dear wife, thy steadfastness:'
And clasp'd her in his arms with many a kiss.

'And sche for wonder took of it no
heed — keepe,
She herde not what thing he to hir sayde,
fared, started — Sche ferd as sche hadde stert out of a sleepe,
Til sche out of hir masidnesse
awoke — abrayde.
'Grisild,' quod he, 'by God that for
died — us deyde,
Thou art my wyf, non other I ne[2] have,
Ne never had, as God my soule save.

But she for wonder took no heed of him,
She heard not any of the words he spoke,
She seemed as one that starteth from a dream,
Till she from her astonishment awoke.
'Griselde,' cried he, 'it was a cruel joke:
Thou art my wife, none other one I have,
Nor never had—as God my soul shall save;

'This is thy[3] doughter, which thou hast supposed
To be my wif: that other faithfully
Shal be myn heir, as I have ay purposed.
Thow bar hem of thy body trewely.
mayest thou — At Boloyne have I kept hem prively.
Tak hem agayn, for now maistow not seye
lost — That thou hast lorn noon of thy children tweye.

'This is thy daughter, whom thou hast supposed
To be my wife—that other faithfully
Shall be my heir, as I have long disposed;
For they are both thy children, verily.
I kept them at Bologna privily.
Take them again, thou canst not say, as once,
Thou hast lost either of thy little ones.

[1] Tyrwhitt and Skeat. [2] Tyrwhitt. [3] Skeat.

Glossary.		
	'And folk, that other weyes han seyd of me,	'And folk, who otherwise have said of me,
done	I warn hem wel, that I have doon this deede	I warn them well that I have acted thus,
	For no malice, ne for no cruelté,	Neither in malice nor in cruelty,
to assay, womanhood	But for tassaye in theethy wommanhede;	Solely to prove thy patience marvellous,
	And not to slen my children (God	And not to slay my babes (God
forbid	forbede!)	hinder us!)
quietly	But for to kepe hem prively and stille	But to conceal them secretly apart
	Til I thy purpos knewe, and al thy wille!'	Until I learned thy purpose and thy heart!'

You may fancy you see Griselda at this moment, standing in her rags before the glittering company, and her brain dazed with wondering whether this were some new freak, or the truth that brought unheard-of joy. But nature had been taxed too far, and all her courage could not bear up against the shock.

in a swoon	Whan sche this herd, aswone doun she fallith,	When she heard this, all senseless down she falleth,
swooning	For pitous joy, and after her swownyng	For piteous joy—and half unconsciously
	Sche bothe hir yonge children to hir callith,	Both her young children unto her she calleth,
	And in hir armes, pitously wepyng,	And in her arms, weeping so piteously,
	Embraseth hem, and tendrely kissyng,	Embraceth them, with kisses tenderly,
tears	Ful lik a moder, with hir salte teres	Full like a mother, and the tears she sheds
their hair	Sche bathide bothe hir visage and hir heres.[1]	Bathe the fair faces and the dear loved heads.
	O such a pitous thyng it was to se	O what a piteous thing it was to see
	Hir swownyng and hir pitous voys to here:	Her swooning, and her humble voice to hear!
	'Graund mercy, lord, God thank it you,' quod sche,	'*Grand merci*, lord, God thank you it' (said she),
	'That ye han saved me my children deere.	'That you have saved to me my children dear.
reck	Now rek I never to be ded right heere	Now I care nothing, tho' I die right here—
stand	Sith I stond in your love and in your grace	Since I have won your grace, and kept your heart—
	No fors of deth, ne whan my spirit pace.	What matters death! nor when my soul shall part!
	'O tendre, O dere, O yonge children myne,[2]	'O young, O dear, O tender children mine,
believed	Youre woful moder wende stedefastly	Your hapless mother thought in all her wo
wild dogs	That cruel houndes or som foul vermyne	That cruel beasts of prey and foul vermine

[1] Skeat. [2] Skeat and Tyrwhitt.

GLOSSARY.		
	Had eten yow: but God of his mercy,	Had slain you both; but God had mercy—lo!
	And your benigne fader tenderly	He and your loving father will'd it
preserved you, moment	Hath doon yow kepe. And in that same stounde	That you should be preserved: ' and said no more,
sank	Al sodeinly sche swapped doun to grounde.	But suddenly fell fainting on the floor.
swoon, firmly	And in hir swough so sadly holdith sche	And in her swoon so closely holdeth she
to embrace them	Hir children tuo, whan sche gan hem tembrace,	Her new-found children in a strong embrace,
skill	That with gret sleight and gret difficulté	That those around unclasp not easily
tear away (Fr. *arracher*)	The children from her arm they gonne arace.	The fingers which so firmly interlace:
	O! many a teer on many a pitous face	O! many a tear on many a pitying face
down, stood, beside	Doun ran of hem that stooden hir bisyde,	Ran down in token of deep sympathy—
hardly	Unnethe aboute hir mighte thay abyde.	Scarce could they bear to watch her agony.
cheers, sorrow	Waltier hir gladith, and hir sorwe slakith,	Walter consoleth her as she awaketh:
abashed	Sche rysith up abaisshed from hir traunce,	She riseth up bewildered from her trance:
everybody	And every wight hir joy and feste makith,	Each presseth round about and merry maketh
countenance	Til sche hath caught agayn hir continaunce;	Until she hath recovered countenance.
comforts her	Wauter hir doth so faithfully plesaunce,	With kisses and with loving word and glance
dainty	That it was daynté for to see the cheere	Walter doth cheer her—sweet it was to see
together	Bitwix hem tuo, now thay be met in feere.	The joy they felt—united happily.
their	These ladys, whan that thay hir tyme saye,	And when they saw their time these ladies gay
saw	Hau taken hir, and into chambre goon,	Unto a chamber led her forth with them,
have	And strippen hir out of hir rude arraye,	And stript her out of all her rude array,
shone	And in a cloth of gold that brighte schon,	And in apparel bright with many a gem
crown, stone	With a coroun of many a riche stoon	Clad her, and, crownëd with a diadem
	Upon hir heed, they into halle hir broughte,	Upon her head, they brought her to the hall,
she ought to be	And ther sche was honoured as hir oughte.	Where she was meetly honoured of them all.
	Thus hath this pitous day a blisful ende;	Thus hath this piteous day a blissful end,
best	For every man and womman doth his might	Till every man and woman in the rout

Glossary.		
	This day in mirth and revel to despende,	Striveth the day in mirth and glee to spend,
welkin	Til on the welken schon the sterres brighte;	Till in the darken'd sky the stars shone out;
stately, man's	For more solempne in every mannes sighte	For greater and more sumptuous, without doubt,
greater, cost	This feste was, and gretter of costage,	This revel was—and there was more to pay—
	Than was the revel of hir mariage.	Than the rejoicings on her marriage-day.

Thus dwelt, for many years after, Walter and his wife in peace and joy; and I hope that the suffering of that day was the last Griselda had to bear at the hands of her capricious and wilful spouse. The pretty daughter Walter married to one of the greatest lords in Italy; and he then brought Griselda's old father to dwell in peace and comfort in his own court.

His son succeeded to his state and rank, and married happily, though he did not tempt and torment his wife as Walter did; for the world is not so strong as it once was, and people cannot bear such treatment now!

The story is told, not that wives should imitate Griselda in humility, for it would be unbearable, even if they did; but that every one in his degree should be constant in adversity as Griselda was. For if one woman could be so submissive to a mortal man, how much more ought we to take patiently all that God sends as our lot in life.

But one word before I stop! It would be hard to find in a whole city three, or even two, Griseldas nowadays. The gold in their nature is now so mixed with base metal that in any great trial the coin would sooner break than bend.

also	Grisild is deed, and eek hir pacience,	Dead is Griselda, and her patience,
once	And bothe at oones buried in Itayle;	Both buried in one grave in Italy;
	For whiche I crye in open audience	So I entreat in open audience
	No weddid man so hardy be to assayle	No wedded man be rash enough to try
	His wyves pacience, in hope to fynde	His own wife's patience, in the hope to find
	Grisildes, for in certeyn he schal fayle.	Griselda's, for he'll fail most certainly!

HERE ENDS THE 'CLERK'S TALE.'

NOTES BY THE WAY.

[The tender pathos in Chaucer's telling of this story (which he borrowed from Petrarch, but which is really much older than his time) cannot be excelled in any story we know of. The definite human interest running all through it points to some living Griselda; but who she was, or where she came from, no one knows. Resignation, so steadfast and so willing, was the virtue of an early time, when the husband was really a 'lord and master;' and such submission in a woman of the present civilisation would be rather mischievous than meritorious. If a modern wife cheerfully consented to the murder of her children by her spouse, she would probably be consigned to a *maison de santé*, while her husband expiated his sins on the scaffold; and if she endured other persecutions,

such as Griselda did, it is to be hoped some benevolent outsider would step in, if only to prevent cruelty to animals.

But it must be remembered that in the old world wives held a very different position in society, and the obedience of all the household to the lord of the castle was the chief secret of peace, discipline, and unity, as obedience to the captain of a vessel is now. We may also infer, from many hints in this Tale, the admiration felt for that kind of self-command in which people of a ruder time were so deficient. When almost everybody gave way habitually to violent emotions of all sorts, those who could rein in feeling were held in high esteem. Perhaps Walter himself may not have been wantonly cruel, but only so bewildered by these unaccustomed virtues that he could not trust their sincerity without experiments.

Walter's is a character as remarkable, as clearly defined, and as consistently thought out, as those of the rivals in the *Knight's Tale*: (see my article on 'Chaucer's Characters,' *University Magazine*, January, 1879). It is that of a sceptic, capricious, wilful, eccentric, the spoilt child of his serfs, but kindly at heart; obstinate enough in carrying out his resolutions, and restlessly seeking the *terra firma* of secure belief, like one resenting his own inability to believe, so that at times one almost pities him: vain, loving to astonish people, but at the bottom honourable and generous. This we see underlying all his actions, from his eccentric mode of marrying, to his last capricious outrage. We may suppose that he was led to far greater lengths than he projected, by Griselda's eagerness to turn the second cheek to the smiter. He may have been half irritated by her servile indifference to her position, and doglike attachment, and thus he gives up the complaisant attitudinising (which does not impose on her) after his first trial of her, and the following trials are respectively more brutal and severe. 'Asketh no rede of me,' cries Griselda, and he takes her at her word. Griselda is throughout consistent; but hers is not, like his, a complex character, and is correspondingly less interesting. Chaucer himself feels that she must have been trying, with all her virtue—'it would be unbearable,' he says, were all wives like her—but he describes warmly her finest quality, her courage in restraining herself before 'her folk,' proving that her patience sprang from strength, not weakness; and no doubt the real moral of the tale is the complete disinterestedness and tenacity of love.

There are some exquisitely neat touches in the Tale, as the crafty and flattering words in which the spokesman of his people urges him to marry—'Boweth your neck under the blissful yoke of sovereignty, not service'—and the humour of the people on his second marriage, slewing round because *rien ne succède comme le succès.*

Chaucer seems to me to have devoted especial pains to the *Clerk's Tale*, relating it in the same versification as the history of the pious Constance (*Man of Law's Tale*), the holy St. Cecilia (*Second Nonne's Tale*), and the *Prioress's Tale*—all religious, and undoubtedly written *con amore.*

The story of Griselda winds up with real artistic power, the Clerk concluding with an ironical little song addressed to ordinary wives, so as to leave his hearers laughing, instead of depressed by the inadequate reward of patient Grizel's virtues. This little song consists of six beautiful verses, of six lines only each, in which every line rhymes with the corresponding line in the five other verses. Clearly great labour has been lavished on it—but I have not included it, as the ironical directions to wives to be *bad* wives would be probably not understood by a child, and superfluous if they were.

It is impossible to read this Tale without observing how admirably it could be dramatised: and in 1393 it was actually produced on the stage in Paris. *Patient Grizel* has of course passed into a proverb.]

THE MONK'S TALE.

GLOSSARY.		
	OUR hoste seyde, 'As I am faithful man,	Our Host cried out, 'As I'm a faithful man,
	And by the precious corpus Madrian[1]	And by the precious *corpus Madrian*,
	I hadde lever than a barel ale	I'd sooner have than any barrel ale,
	That goode lief my wyf hadde herd this tale!	That good old soul my wife to hear that tale!
	. . . . .	. . . . .
matter	But let us passe awey fro this mateere:	But let us quit that subject; now my lord
	My lord the Monk' (quod he) 'be mery of chere.	The Monk,' (quoth he) 'give us a merry word!
	For ye shal telle a tale trewely.	For you shall tell a story, certainly.
stands	Lo! Rouchester stant heere faste by!	Why, Rochester is full in sight, hard by!
break	Ryd forth, myn owen lord, brek nat our game,	Ride forth, my master, do not mar the game.
	But by my trewthe, I knowe nat your name,	But, by my troth, I do not know your name;
	Wher I shal calle yow, my lord dan[2] John,	What shall I call you, now—my lord Sir John,
	Or dan Thomas, or elles dan Albon?'	Or else Sir Thomas, or my lord Albon?
	. . . . .	. . . . .
	This worthy Monk took al in patience	This worthy Monk took all in patience;
best	And seyde, 'I wol doon al my diligence	And said, 'I'll gladly do my diligence
	As fer as souneth in to honestee	As far as suiteth to propriety,
	To telle yow a tale, or two, or three.'	To tell you all a tale—or two, or three.'
manner	I WOL bywaile in maner of tregedye	I will bewail in many a tragic story
	The harm of hem that stode in heigh degre	The griefs of those who were of high degree,
	And fallen so ther nas no remedye	And helplessly have fall'n away from glory
	To bring hem out of hir adversite.	Without a balm for their adversity.
	For certeynly, whan Fortune lust to fle,	Truly, when Fortune doth think fit to flee,

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[1] A common oath—'by the body of St. Madrian.'

[2] *Dan*, or *Sir*. 'The custom of prefixing the addition of Sir to the Christian name of clergyman was formerly usual in this country. Fuller . . . gives this reason why there were formerly more Sirs than Knights: such priests as have the addition of Sir were men not graduated in the university, being in orders, but not degrees; whilst others, entitled Masters, had commenced in the arts.'—Sir John Hawkins's *History of Music*.

Glossary.		
	Ther may no man the cours of hir whiel holde.	No man the whirling of her wheel can hold.
	Let no man truste on blynde[1] prosperite;	Let no man blindly trust prosperity!
Beware	Beth war by these ensamples trewe and olde.	Be warned by these examples, true and old.

UGOLINO, COUNT OF PISA.

languishing	Of the erl Hugelin of Pise the langour	Earl Ugolin of Pisa's miseries
	Ther may no tonge telle for pite.	Hardly, for pity, told of tongue can be.
	But litel out of Pise stant a tour[2]	A little out of Pisa a tower is,
	In whiche tour in prison yput was he	And in that tower's donjon cast was he:
	And with him ben his litel children thre,	And with him were his little children three.
	The eldest scarsely fyf yere was of age.	The eldest scarcely five years was of age.
great	Alas, Fortune! it was gret cruelte	Ah, Fortune! it was surely cruelty
	Suche briddes for to put in such a cage.	Such little birds to pen in such a cage!
	Dampnyd was he to deye in that prisoun	Condemned he was within that tower to die,
	For Roger,[3] which that bisschop was of Pise,	For Roger, Pisa's bishop, by his tongue
made	Had on him maad a fals suggestioun,	Had harm'd him, and he kill'd him with a lie,
began	Thurgh which the peple gan on him arise	Thro' which there rose against him all the throng
	And putte him in prisoun in such a wise	Of people, and in prison he was flung,
way	As ye han herd: and mete and drynke he hadde	As you have heard: and meat and drink he had
hardly	So smal, that wel unnethe it may suffise	So little that it could not last them long,
	And therewithal it was ful pore and badde.	And therewithal the food was poor and bad.
	And on a day bifel that in that hour	And on a day, about the wonted hour
meat	Whan that his mete wont was to be i-broughte	When that his wretched food was daily brought,
	The gayler schet the dores of that toure:	The gaoler shut the doors throughout the tower.—
	He herd it wel, but here spake right noughte	He heard the echoing clang, yet spake he nought,
	And in his herte anoon ther fel a thoughte	For on his heart there fell a deadly thought

[1] Fortune is represented blind.

[2] The Leaning Tower of Pisa is well known, where this outrage happened; it stands just outside the town.

[3] Archbishop Ruggieri degli Ubaldino, his enemy.

GLOSSARY.
do (make) as Fr. *faire*

That thay for hungir wolden doon him dyen.
'Alas,' (quod he), 'alas that I was wrought!'
Therwith the teres felle fro his eyen.

His yonge sone that thre yer was of age
Unto him sayde, 'Fader, why do ye wepe?
Whan wil the gayler bringen oure potage?
Is ther no morsel bred that ye doon kepe?
I am so hongry that I may not slepe.
Now wolde God that I mighte slepe ever!
Than shuld not hunger in my wombe crepe.
Ther nis no thyng, save bred, that me were lever.'

Thus day by day this childe bigan to crie
Til in his fadres barm adoun he lay
And sayde: 'Farwel, fader, I moot dye.'
And kist his fader, and dyde the same day.
And whan the woful fader deed it sey,
For wo his armes tuo he gan to byte
And sayde, 'Fortune, alas and wala wa!
Thy false whele my wo al may I wite.'

His childer wende that it for hongir was
That he his armes gnew and nought for wo,
And sayden: 'Fader, do nought so, allas!
But rather ete the fleisch upon us tuo.
Oure fleisch thou yave us, oure fleisch thou take us fro
And ete ynough:' right thus they to him seyde
And after that, withinne a day or tuo,
They layde hem in his lappe adoun deyde.

made
would to God
belly
is no more welcome
see
began, bite
impute to
gnawed
from

That he was doom'd of hunger there to die!—
'Alas!' quoth he, 'the day that I was wrought!'
And tears came thick and fast unto his eye.

His youngest son—a little child of three—
Said unto him, 'Father, why do you weep?
Will gaoler bring our supper presently?
Is there not one wee bit of bread you keep?
I am so hungry that I cannot sleep.
If God would let me sleep for evermore
No more this hunger into me would creep.
No thing there is—save bread—I long so for.'

Thus day by day this child began to cry,
Till in his father's lap adown he lay,
And murmur'd 'Farewell, father, for I die.'
And kiss'd his father, and died the selfsame day.
And when the father saw how still he lay,
In his own helpless arms he struck his teeth,
And cried 'O Fortune! woe, and well away!
O Fate that wheel'd me on to worse than death!'

His children thought that it for hunger was
That he his arms did gnaw—and not for woe—
And said, 'O father, do not so! alas!
But rather eat the flesh upon us two.
Our flesh you gave us, take our flesh us fro,
And eat enough:' thus to him did they say.
And after that, within a day or so
They laid them in his lap—and passed away.

GLOSSARY.		
in despair, died	Himself despeired eek for honger starf.	And he himself in desperate hunger died:
	Thus ended is this mighty eorl of Pise;	Thus ended is the mighty earl of Pise:
carved, cut away	For his estate Fortune fro him carf.	So Fortune sliced away his wealth and pride!
	Of this tregede it ought ynough suffise.	And of the tragedy, this may well suffice.
	Who so wil hiere it in a lenger wise	Whoso would hear it in a longer wise,
Italy	Rede the grete poet of Itaile	May learn from that great poet of Itaille
	That highte Daunte, for he can it devise	Whose name is Dante, all their miseries
	Fro poynt to poynt, nought oon word wil he fayle.	From point to point—not one word will he fail.

ZENOBIA.

	CENOBIA, of Palmire[1] the queene	Zenobia, of Palmyra the proud queen
write	As writen Perciens of hir noblesse,	(As Persians tell us of her nobleness),
	So worthy was in armes and so keene	In deeds of arms so great was, and so keen,
surpassed	That no wight passid hir in hardynesse	That none exceeded her in hardiness,
	Ne in lynage, ne in other gentilesse.	In lineage, and all natural worthiness.
	Of the king's blood of Pers she is descendid;	From blood of Persian kings was she descended.
beauty	I say nat that sche hadde most fairnesse:	I say not she possess'd most loveliness:
	But of hir schap sche might not be amended.	But in her shape she could not be amended.
	Fro hir childhod I fynde that she fledde	From childhood upward, find I that she fled
	Office of wommen, and to woode sche wente,	Office of women: to the woods she went:
	And many a wild hertes blood sche schedde	And many a wild hart's blood therein she shed
	With arwes brode that sche to hem sente:	With the broad arrows from her bowstring sent;
soon caught	Sche was so swyft, that sche anoon hem hente.	Swift-footed, she could catch the beast half-spent;
	And whan that sche was elder, sche wolde kille	And when she had grown older, she would kill

[1] The Greek name of a great and splendid city of Upper Syria. Its original name signified the City of Palms. Zenobia assumed the imperial diadem A.D. 266.

GLOSSARY.

ore to pieces — Leouns, lebardes, and beres al to-rente,
Lions and leopards, yea, the bears she rent,

wield — And in hir armes weld hem at hir wille.[1]
And with her hands destroy'd them at her will.

Sche dorste wilde bestes dennes seke,
The wild beast in his den she dared to seek,

ran — And renne in the mounteyns al the night,
And wander in the mountains all the night,

And slepe under a busch; and sche couthe eeke
And sleep beneath a bush: and she could eek

also
main — Wrastil by verray fors and verray might
Wrestle by very force and very might

With eny yong man, were he never so wight.
With any young man, and conquer him outright.

sturdy — Ther mighte no thing in hir armes stonde.
Nought could the vigour of her arm defy.

young — She kept hir mayden hede from every wight,
And pure she kept her life, and her delight

deigned a slave — To no man deyned hire for to be bonde.
Was in the forest and her liberty.

But atte last, hir frendes han hir maried
But by her people she at length was married

city — To Odenake, a prince of that citee;
To Odenathus, prince of the citee

Al were it so that sche him longe taried.
(Though for a spouse she long enough had tarried),

And ye schul understonde how that he
And I would have you understand that he

Hadde such fantasies as hadde sche.
Had just such whims and fantasies as she.

knit in one — But natheles, whan thay were knyt in fere
But nathless, when the two had come together

They lyved in joye and felicité:
They lived in joy and in felicity:

For ech of hem had other leef and dere.
For each of them did greatly love the other.

. . . . . .
. . . . . .

Tuo sones by this Odenak had sche,
Two sons by her to Odenath were born,

The which sche kept in vertu and lettrure.[2]
Whom in all careful virtues she did train.

love of letters

But now unto our purpos torne we;
But thence unto our story we must turn.

I say, so worschipful a creature,
I say so worshipful a sovereign

reasonably liberal — And wys, and worthy, and large with mesure,
Freehanded and yet wise in loss or gain,

painstaking — So penyble in the werre and curteys eeke,
So brave in war, and courteous beside,

also — Ne more labour might in werre endure
So long-enduring in the battle-plain,

Was nowher noon in al this world to seeke.
Was nowhere none, in all the world so wide.

---

[1] These feats must be taken *cum grano salis*; mediæval exaggeration, or 'gabbing,' was very popular.

[2] Zenobia was the friend of the philosopher Longinus, who lived in her court. He was put to death by Aurelian, A.D. 273.

Glossary.		
	Hir riche array, if it myghte be tolde,	Her rich apparel—if it might all be told—
	As wel in vessel as in hir clothing	Both in rare vessels and her garb ablaze,
jewelry (Fr. *pierrerie*)	Sche was al clothed in perré and gold.	She was all clad in jewel-work and gold.
	And eek sche lafte nought for hir hunting	Yet she forgot not, thro' her love of chase,
knowledge	To have of sondry tonges ful knowyng:	To understand strange tongues and foreign phrase
	Whan she hadde leyser and mighte therto entende	When she had leisure, and her mind was bent
learn, liking	To lerne bookes was al hir likyng,	Therto, in books her pleasure was always,
spend	How sche in vertu might hir lyf despende.	To learn how nobly might her life be spent.

Many kingdoms she conquered with her doughty husband's help; eastern lands, and many a city that belonged to Rome. While Odenathus lived, no foe could get the better of them.

And when Odenathus was dead, she held her realm with strength, and fought so fiercely with her own hand that there was no prince near but was thankful if she would leave him alone. Neither Roman Emperor, nor Armenian, nor Egyptian, nor Syrian, nor Arabian foe durst come into the field with her.

attire	In kynges abyt went hir sones tuo,	In kingly habit walk'd her sons, the two
	As heires of hir fadres regnes alle;	Heirs to their father's kingdoms one and all:
	And Hermanno, and Themaleo[1]	Thermaleo one, the other Hermanno,
Their	Here names were, as Parciens hem calle.	For thus the Persian tongue their names did call.
ever	But ay Fortune hath in hir honey galle:	But in her honey Fortune mingles gall!
no long while	This mighty queene may no whil endure,	This mighty queen not long retain'd success:
kingdom	Fortune out of hir regne made hir falle	And Fortune forc'd her from her throne to fall
	To wrecchednesse and to mysadventure.	Into disaster and great wretchedness.

When the government of Rome came into the hands of Aurelian he bound himself to do vengeance on the Queen Zenobia. And with his legions he attacked her, and at last put her to flight, and presently made her his captive.[2] So he won the land, and carried her and two sons fettered back to Rome.

	Amonges other thinges that he wan,	And, among other trophies that he won,
jewelry (Fr. *pierrerie*)	Hir chaar, that was with gold wrought and perrë,	Her car, all wrought with gold and jewelry,
	This grete Romayn, this Aurilian,	This Roman victor, this Aurelian,
	Hath with him lad, for that men schulde se.	Hath with him brought, for all the folk to see.

[1] Heremianus and Timolaus, *Boccaccio*. [2] Palmyra was taken by Aurelian, A.D. 273.

Glossary.		
	Biforë this triumphë walkith sche,	Foremost amid the triumph walketh she
hanging	And gilte cheynes in hir necke hongyng:	Captive, gold chains her fallen neck array,
	Corouned sche was, as aftir hir degre	And they have crown'd her after her degree;
jewelry (Fr. *pierrerie*)	And ful of perré chargid hir clothyng.	And with their precious stones her robe is gay.
once	Allas, Fortunë! sche that whilom was	Well away, Fortune! She that lately was
dreadful	Dredful to kynges and to emperoures,	Terror of armies and of emperours,
stare	Now gaureth al the pepul on hir, alas!	Suffers the stare of all the populace.
helmeted, stout battles	And sche that helmyd was in starke stoures	She who was helm'd in battle's bloody hours
	And wan bi force tounes strong and toures,	And won by force strong towns and haughty towers
head	Schal on hir heed now were a vitremyte:[1]	Shall wear a shameful garb upon her head:
	And sche that bar the cepter ful of floures	And she that bare the sceptre full of flowers
repay her expenses	Schal bere a distaf hir coste for to quyte.	Shall hold a distaff for her daily bread.

CRŒSUS.

once	This riche Cresus,[2] whilom kyng of Lyde,	The wealthy Crœsus, sometime king of Lyde
feared	Of which Cresus Cirus him sore dradde,	(Of which Crœsus Cyrus was sore adread),
amidst	Yet was he caught amyddes al his pride,	Yet was he caught in spite of all his pride,
burn	And to the fuyr to brenne him men him ladde.	And to the fire to slay him, men him led.
	But such a rayn doun fro the heven schadde	But such a rainfall did the heavens shed,
	That slough the fuyr and made him to eschape.	It slew the fire and let the king escape:
prudent	But to be war yet grace noon he hadde,	But to be wary never grace he had,
hang open-mouthed	Til fortune on the galwes made him gape.	Till Fortune made him on the gallows gape.
escaped	Whan he was eschaped, he couthe nought stente,	And being free he could not be content,
give in	For to bygynne a newe werre ageyn:	Save to begin the weary war again;
believed	He wende wel, for that Fortune him sente	He judg'd, because good Fortune him had sent

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[1] *Vitremyte*, fool's cap? (V. Skeat, 'Monk's Tale,' p. 183, ed. 1877. Thus the Canon's Yeoman, describing his poverty, says, 'Now may I were an hose upon myn heed.'

[2] Crœsus, last king of Lydia, reigned B.C. 560–546.

GLOSSARY.		
	Such hap that he eschaped thurgh the rayn,	Such chance that he escapëd thro the rain,
	That of his foos he mighte not be slayn.	That by his foes he never could be slain.
dreamed	And eek a sweven upon a night he mette	And lo! a dream upon a night he met:
delighted	Of which he was so proud and eek so fayn,	Of which he was so proud and eek so fain
	That in vengeaunce he al his herte sette.	That unto vengeance all his heart was set.
	Upon a tree he was set as him thoughte	Upon a tree he rested (as he thought)
	Wher Jupiter him wissch bothe bak and syde,	While Jupiter him wash'd both back and side;
	And Phebus eek a fair towail him broughte	And Phœbus a fair towel for him brought
increased	To drye him with, and therfore wex his pryde.	To dry him with—hence ever waxt his pride.
	And to his doughter that stood him biside,	He called his daughter, standing him beside
	Which that he knew in heigh science abounde,	(Whom in high science knew he to abound),
	And bad her telle what it signifyde,	And bade him tell her what it signified:
	And sche his dreem right thus began expounde.	And thus his dream to him she did expound.
	'The tree,' quod sche, 'the galwes is to mene,	'The tree,' quoth she, 'the gallows doth it mean,
	And Jupiter betokenith snow and rayn,	And Jupiter betokeneth rain and snow;
	And Phebus with his towail so clene	And Phœbus with his towel fair and clean
	Tho ben the sonnes stremes, soth to sayn.	Doth signify the sunbeams, as I know.
	Thou schalt anhanged ben, fader, certayn;	Father, thou truly shalt be hanged: and lo,
	Rayn schal the wasch, and sonne schal the drye.'	Rain shall thee wash and sunshine shall thee dry.'
flatly	Thus warned sche him ful plat and eek ful playn,	Thus warn'd of his own daughter he hath been;
	His doughter which that called was Phanie.	Had he but hearkened. She was call'd Phanie.
	And hanged was Cresus this proude king,	And truly, hanged was Crœsus the proud king:
royal Ital. *reale*	His real tronë mighte him not availe:	His royal throne might nought his life avail.
manner of	Tregedie is non other maner thing	All tragedy doth teach no surer thing—
	Ne can in singyng crien ne biwaile,	Nor can do else, sing she, or cry, or wail—
	But for that Fortune wil alway assayle	But this, that Fortune alway will assail
unexpected, kingdoms	With unwar strook the regnes that ben proude.	With sudden stroke a state that is too proud.

GLOSSARY.		
	For whan men trusteth hir, than wil sche fayle, And cover hir brighte face as with a clowde.	For when men trust her, she will surely fail, And cover her bright face as with a cloud.

HOLOFERNES.

	WAS never capitaigne under a king	Never was captain under any king
kingdoms	That regnes mo put in subjiccioun	Harder on realms that in his keeping came,
field	Ne strenger was in feld of alle thing	Nor stronger in the field, in everything
greater	As in his tyme, ne gretter of renoun;	Pertaining to his time: of wider fame,
high	Ne more pompous in heih presumpcioun	Or more presumptuous on his mighty name
ever	Than Oliphern, which that Fortune ay kist	Than Holofernes—whom dame Fortune kiss'd
led	So licorously, and ladde him up and doun,	And smiled on, and did lead him up and down
knew	Til that his heed was of, er he it wist.	Until his head was off—before he wist!
	Nought oonly that the world had of him awe	Not only was he held in bitter awe
losing	For lesyng of riches and liberte,	For the mere sake of wealth and liberty,
deny	But he made every man reneye his lawe:	But he destroyed the people's creed and law.
	Nabugodonosor was lord, sayde he.	Nebuchadnezzar was sole lord, said he,
None, should	Noon other god ne schuld honoured be.	No other god beside durst honour'd be,
dared, man	Ayeinst his heste dar no wight trespace	And no man durst rebel at his behest
city	Save in Betholia, a strong citē,	Save in Betholia, a strong citèe,
priest	Wher Eliachim a prest was of that place.	Wherein Eliachim ministered as priest.
take notice	But tak keep of that dethe of Olipherne:	But mark you all, the death of Holofern!
host, one	Amyd his ost he dronke lay on night	Amid his host he drunken lay one night
barn	Withinne his tente, large as is a berne;	Within his tent—as roomy as a barn—
power	And yit, for al his pomp and al his might,	And yet for all his pomp and all his might
stretched out	Judith, a womman, as he lay upright,	Judith—a woman—found him stretch'd outright
off smote	Slepyng, his heed of smot, and fro his tente,	Sleeping, and slew him, and from out the tent
secretly, stole	Ful prively sche stal from every wight,	She stole away (for none had seen the sight)
	And with his heed unto hir toun sche wente.	And with his head, to her own town she went.

HERE ENDS THE 'MONK'S TALE.'

NOTES BY THE WAY.

[The frequent invocation of Fortune, complaints of her 'false wheel' and reference to her of various normal events, especially in moments of agony when it seems unnatural to begin moralising on the transitory nature of life, may surprise many readers of Chaucer. It seems as though some direct personality and power of interference with man was attributed to 'fortune'—by which we have come to mean *chance*, itself implying the natural result of causes unknown to us.

But Chaucer certainly never speaks of fortune in the sense of an unpreventible *chance*, else he would do so less seriously.

It appears to me that the notion of fortune had some affinity with that of Nemesis—not the power which is our poetical term for the retribution of wrongdoing—but the early Greek notion of an envious deity, which grudged to man too much honour or content. As the lightning is said to strike the highest trees, so the Greek Nemesis was held to be a *cutter off of supreme things*, a being of some mean, radical tendency to reduce states and qualities as much as possible to a dead level, eminently disagreeable, eminently vigilant, eminently potent. No doubt it is an idea most suggestive, and created by far-reaching melancholy observation of life.

If this be so, and if there was any mediæval real belief in such a power, derived from Greek writings, it would be no longer out of place for Ugolino's first thought to be of fortune as his foe, when his children were dying by inches: or for Chaucer to attribute to the envious deity Zenobia's fall, and Cræsus's, and the development in Holofernes of a condition of mind and life extremely tempting to her to 'nip' in its blossom. Holofernes' story occurs in 'Judith,' (*Apocrypha*).

The *Monk's Tale*—or two of the stories in it at least—can be approximately dated. The *De Petro Hispanie Rege* could only have been written after 1369, as it describes the fall of Peter the Cruel, whose daughter Constance became Duchess of Lancaster, and the seizure of his crown by his 'bastard brother,' otherwise called the Good. Chaucer's praise of Peter was doubtless politic, as the defunct father-in-law of John of Gaunt. Another little story, *De Barnabo Comite Mediolano*, relates the fall of the robber-Duke of Milan, 'scourge of Lombardy, who perished in prison in 1385, the probable date of the *Monk's Tale*. The story of Ugolino is of course derived from Dante, and illustrates mediæval humanity—abbreviated, because (as Chaucer says in closing the *Man of Law's Tale*) the prolongation of a dismal story wearied him. Zenobia's history is derived from Boccaccio. The Bible stories were probably written after Wiclif's English Bible appeared.]

THE NUN'S PRIEST'S TALE.

GLOSSARY.

'Ho,' quod the Knight, 'good sir, no more of this,
That ye han seyd is right ynow, ywis,
And mochel more: for litel heuinesse
Is right ynow to mochel folk, I gesse.
I seye for me, it is a greet disese
Wher as men han ben in grete welthe and ese
To heren of here sodeyn fal, allas!
And the contrarie is Ioye and gret solas:
As whan a man hath ben in poure estaat,
And clymbeth up, and wexeth fortunat,
And ther abydeth in prosperitee,
Swich thing is gladsom, as it thinketh me,
And of swich thing were goodly for to telle.'
'Ye' (quod our hoste) 'by seint Poules belle
Ye saye ryght soth. . . .
For therin is ther no disport ne game.
. . . . . .
Com neer, thou Prest, com hider, thou Sir Iohn,
Tell us swich thing as may our hertes glade,
Be blythe, though thou ryde upon a lade.[1]'

disagreeable
fall
rises in the world
Such

'Stop,' cried the Knight, 'good sir, no more of this.
What you have said is right enough, I wis:
Beside much more; for little heaviness
Is right enough for many folk, I guess.
But for my part, it cannot greatly please
When men have long enjoy'd great wealth and ease,
To hear about their sudden down-falling,
Though the reverse is good, and comforting.
As when a man has been of poor estate
And mends his lot, and waxeth fortunate,
And then continues in prosperity,
Such things are pleasant, as it seems to me,
And of the like 'tis pleasant to hear tell.'
'Yea,' cried our Host, 'and by St. Paul's big bell
Ye speak the truth. . . .
For in such tales is neither sport nor game.
. . . . . .
Come near, thou Priest! come hither, thou Sir John,
Tell us a cheerful tale, to make us glad.
Be gay, although thou ridest on a jade!'

---

[1] Mine host is saucy enough to all the male pilgrims: he treats the Nun's Priest as considerably inferior, as he is, to the wealthy Monk. The latter he boldly rallies, the Nun's Priest he rates, with a sneer at his sorry horse. See note [2], p. 112.

Then the priest good-humouredly began his tale:—

Glossary.		
advanced	A POURE wydow somdel stope in age,	A widow, poor, and now advanc'd in age,
narrow	Was whilom dwellyng in a narwe cotage,	Dwelt in a cot—full humble, I'll engage—
standing	Bisyde a grove, stondyng in a dale.	Hard by a little grove that fring'd a dale.
widow	This wydwe of which I telle yow my tale,	This widow, whom I speak of in my tale,
	Syn thilke day that sche was last a wif,	Since that sad day when she was last a wife
led	In pacience ladde a ful symple lyf,	Led patiently a very simple life.
	For litel was hire catel and hire	Though little were her goods, and small her rent,
economy	By housbondrye of such as God hire sente,	She made the best of all that God her sent,
found (provided for)	Sche fond hireself, and eek hire doughtren tuo.	She kept herself, and by her industry,
	Thre large sowes hadde sche, and no mo,	Two daughters: three fat pigs (no more) had she,
kine	Thre kyn, and eek a scheep that highte Malle.[1]	Three cows, too, and a sheep she called Mall.
chamber	Ful sooty[2] was hir bour, and eek hire halle,	Full sooty was her chamber, and her hall
	In which she eet ful many a sclender meel.	In which she ate her scanty meals, and slight
sharp (Fr. *poignant*), not a bit	Of poynaunt sawce hire needede never a deel.	Need hers of sauce to whet her appetite.
	No deynté morsel passede thurgh hire throte;	No dainty morsel e'er went down her throat,
according	Hire dyete was accordant to hire cote.	Her diet always seem'd to match her coat.
Repletion	Repleccioun ne made hire nevere sik;	Repletion never made her sick, I ween,
A temperate heart's content	Attempre dyete was al hire phisik,	A moderate meal was all her medicine,
	And exercise, and hertes suffisaunce.	And exercise, contented with her lot.
prevented	The goute lette hire nothing for to daunce,	If she would dance, the gout forbade her not,
	Ne poplexie schente not hire heed;	And apoplexy never harm'd her head.
	No wyn ne drank sche, nother whit nor reed;	She drank no wine, no, neither white nor red,
	Hire bord was served most with whit and blak,	Her board was mostly served with white and black,
	Milk and broun bred, in which sche fond no lak,	Milk and brown bread (of which she had no lack),
broiled	Seynd bacoun, and somtyme an ey or tweye,	Broil'd bacon, and an egg or two, some days.
dairywoman	For she was as it were a maner deye.	—She dealt in dairy produce, in small ways.
	A yerd sche hadde, enclosed al aboute	A little yard she had, fenced all about

[1] Probably Molly.

[2] The widow's home consisted of a hut divided into two rooms, the yard or 'house without' like Griselda's was used as a farmyard. The two rooms were called severally 'bower' and 'hall,' one private, the other public. Chimneys were hardly in use, and the smoke of the fire found its way through holes in the roof—can one wonder the rooms were very 'sooty'?

GLOSSARY.		
	With stikkes, and a drye dich withoute,	With sticks, and there was a dry ditch without.
	In which she hadde a cok, highte Chauntecleer,	And here she had a cock, called Chanticleer.
equal	In al the lond, of crowyng nas his peer.	For crowing, in the land he had no peer.
	His vois was merier than the merye orgon,	His voice more merry than the organ's was,
	On masse dayes that in the chirche goon;	Which plays in church so merrily at the mass.
	Wel sikerer was his crowyng in his logge,	More certain was his crowing from his perch
clock (Fr. *horloge*)	Than is a clok,[1] or an abbay orlogge.	Than abbey clock, or bell of any church.

He knew by instinct each ascension of the equinoctial, crowing each hour, none better or louder.

	His comb was redder than the fyn coral,	His comb it was more red than fine corâl,
embattled or indented	And batayllđ, as it were a castel wal.	And all embattled like a castle wall;
bill	His bile was blak, and as the geet it schon;	His bill was black and shone like jet —and blue
toes	Lik asure were his legges, and his ton;	His legs like azure, and his strong toes too.
	His nayles whiter than the lilye flour,	His nails more white than lily buds unroll'd,
	And lik the burnischt gold was his colour.	And then his coat was like the burnished gold!
In rule	This gentil cok hadde in his governaunce	This gallant cock had at his power and will
wait on him	Sevene hennes, for to don al his pleasaunce,	Seven hens, his lordly wishes to fulfil;
lovers	Whiche were his sustres and his paramoures,	Which were his sisters and companions:
	And wonder like to him, as of coloures.	Very like *him*, in their complexions:
hued	Of whiche the faireste hewed on hire throte,	And one, the fairest-tinted on her throat,
	Was cleped fayre damoysele Pertelote.	Was named the beauteous damsel Pertilote.
well mannered (Fr. *de bon air*)	Curteys sche was, discret, and debonaire,	Courteous she was, discreet, and sociable,
companionable	And compainable, and bar hire self ful faire,	And debonair, and held herself so well,
that	Syn thilke day that sche was seven night old,	Yea, ever since she was a fortnight old,
her power	That trewely sche hath the herte in hold	That she the heart of Chanticleer doth hold
locked, limb	Of Chauntecleer loken in every lith;	Lock'd up in her thro' every limb and tint:
	He lovede hire so, that wel him was therwith.	He loved her so, that he was well content.

[1] The earliest complete clock of which there is any record (certain) was made by a Saracen mechanic in the thirteenth century. A great clock was put up at Canterbury Cathedral in 1292, and a *striking* clock in Westminster in 1368. A perfect one was made in Paris by Vick, 1370. The first portable one, 1530. In England no clock went perfectly before that set up at Hampton Court, 1540.

Glossary.		
	But such a joye was it to here hem synge,	But such a joy it was to hear him sing,
began	Whan that the brighte sonne gan to springe,	Whene'er the sunny day began to spring,
	In swete accord, 'my lief is faren on londe.'	Melodiously—'My love is far away!'
at that time	For thilke tyme, as I have understonde,	(For at that period, as I have heard say,
beasts and birds	Bestes and briddes cowde speke and synge.	The animals and birds could speak and sing.)
	And so byfel, that in a dawenynge,	And it befell, that once at day-dawning
	As Chauntecleer among his wyves alle	As Chanticleer among his ladies all
	Sat on his perche, that was in the halle,[1]	Sat on his perch, which spann'd across the hall,
	And next him sat this faire Pertelote,	And next him sat the lovely Pertilote,
	This Chauntecleer gan gronen in his throte,	This Chanticleer 'gan groan within his throat
troubled	As man that in his dreem is drecched sore.	As man that in a dream is troubled sore.
	And whan that Pertelote thus herde him rore,	When Pertilote thus heard him groan and snore
	Sche was agast, and sayde, 'O herte deere,	She was aghast, and said—'My heart's delight,
	What eyleth yow to grone in this manere?	What ails you, that you groan like this to-night?
	Ye ben a verray sleper, fy for schame!'	You are so good a sleeper: fie, for shame!'
	And he answerde and sayde thus, 'Madame,	And he replied and said to her—'Madame,
be not offended	I praye yow, that ye take it nought agrief:	I pray you, that you be not vexed with me:
dreamed	By God, me mette I was in such meschief	Methought, I was in such a misery
affrighted	Right now, that yit myn herte is sore afright.	Just now, that still my heart is full of fright.
	Now God,' quod he, 'my swevene rede aright,	Interpret now (quoth he) my dream aright,
	And keep my body out of foul prisoun!	Heaven keep me out of prison, and all woe!
I dreamed	Me mette, how that I romede up and doun	Methought, as I was roaming to and fro
	Withinne oure yerde, wher as I saugh a beest,	Within our yard, I saw a strange beast halt,
arrest (attack)	Was lik an hound, and wolde han maad areest	Part like a hound, which would have made assault
have	Upon my body, and wolde han had me deed.	Upon my body, and have laid me dead!
	His colour was bitwixe yelwe and reed;	The colour of him seem'd 'twixt yellow and red:

[1] In Italy the lower classes still, like the low Irish, share the house with their cattle and poultry. Near Naples the turkeys are inextricably mixed up with the children; and donkeys live in the common room.

GLOSSARY.		
	And tipped was his tail, and bothe his eeres	And tippëd was his tail, and each sharp ear
remnant	With blak, unlik the remenaunt of	With black, unlike the rest of all his
hairs	his heres;	hair:
	His snowte smal, with glowyng eyen	His snout was small, with two eyes
two	tweye.	glowing bright.
even now, fear, die	Yet of his look for feere almost I deye;	Remembering him I almost die with fright!
	This causede me my gronyng doutelles.'	And this no doubt did cause me so to groan.'
Away	'Avoy!' quod sche, 'fy on yow,	'Away!' quoth she, 'fie on you, timid
heartless coward	herteles!	one!
	Allas!' quod sche, 'for, by that God above!	Alas! (quoth she) for by yon heaven above
	Now han ye lost myn herte and al my love;	Now have you lost my heart, and all my love.
	I can nought love a coward, by my feith.	I cannot love a coward, by my faith!
	For certes, what so eny womman seith,	For sure, whatever any woman saith,
	We alle desiren, if it mighte be,	We each desire (if haply it may be)
bold	To han housbondes, hardy, wise, and fre,	Our husbands to be bold, and rich and free,
secret	And secré,[1] and no nygard, ne no fool,	And secret: not a niggard, not a fool,
	Ne him that is agast of every tool,	Not one to be afraid of every tool,
boaster	Ne noon avauntour, by that God above!	And not a braggart—by the heavens above!
	How dorste ye sayn for schame unto youre love,	How dare you say, for shame, unto your love,
	That any thing mighte make yow aferd?	That anything can make you feel afeard?
	Han ye no mannes herte, an han a berd?[2]	Have you no man's heart, you that have a beard?
	Allas! and konne ye ben agast of swevenys?	And can you be so frightened at a dream?
	Nothing, God wot, but vanité, in swevene is.	There's only nonsense, goodness know, in them.
	Swevenes engendren of repleccioun,	Bad dreams are caused by indigestiòn,
	And ofte of fume, and of complecciouns,	—By overfeeding, fume, complexiòn—
	Whan humours ben to abundant in a wight.	By humours too abundant in a wight.
person	Certes this dreem, which ye han met to-night,	No doubt this dream that you have had to-night
	Cometh of the grete superfluité	It cometh of a superfluity
	Of youre reede *colera*, pardé,[3]	Of bile; and a red humour, certainly:
	Which causeth folk to dremen in here dremes	Which causeth folk to fancy in their dreams
	Of arwes, and of fyr with reede	That they see arrows—fire with
gleams	leemes,	flaming beams—

[1] Secret used here probably in the classical sense, meaning private, apart from others, all to one's self.

[2] We all know the commonplace of a scolding woman, amusingly brought in. 'Call yourself a man? You got a beard?' &c.

[3] *Pardé*, from the French oath *par Dieu*. Oaths of all kinds were too common in the fourteenth century, as they were in the eighteenth.

Glossary.		
	Of grete bestes, that thi woln hem byte,	Red beasts, ready to bite them—passionate
contest great, little	Of contek, and of whelpes greete and lite;	Contentions, or grim monsters small and great—
	Right as the humour of malencolie	Right as a melancholy humour makes
	Causeth ful many a man, in sleep, to crye,	Full many a man cry out, before he wakes
	For fere of beres, or of boles blake,	For fear of bears and bulls, all black of hue,
will	Or elles blake develes woln him take.	Or else black devils that are catching you.
	Of othere humours couthe I telle also,	Of other humours could I also tell
	That wirken many a man in slep ful woo;	That make full many a sleeper miserable:
	But I wol passe as lightly as I can.	But I will pass as lightly as I can.

'Did not Cato the wise say, never mind dreams? I beg you, by all that is sacred, to take some physic, before you get some fever or ague which may kill you. For, though there is no apothecary in this town, I can find you herbs to cure you whether you suffer from exhaustion or repletion!—you shall take both, to make sure. Pick them up, right as they grow! and never fear dreams.'

Chanticleer did not however much relish the prospect of her wholesale physicking, and refutes Cato by 'many a man of more authority than ever Cato was' to prove that dreams are not idle but prophetic.

'I can tell you two stories (cries he) related by Cicero that bear upon the subject.'

'Two friends once went on a pilgrimage together,' runs one story, 'and it happened that they came into a town which was so crowded with pilgrims that they found that they could not be lodged together. There was not so much as a cottage left that could take both of them in. So they separated for the night; one found a decent lodging, the other had to sleep in a stall among the oxen.'

	And so bifel, that, long er it were day,	And so befell, that long ere it was day,
dreamed:	This man mette in his bed, ther as he lay,	The one dreamed, in the bed wherein he lay,
fellow began	How that his felawe gan upon him calle,	That his companion did unto him call,
	And sayde, 'allas! for in an oxe stalle	Saying, 'Alas! for in an ox's stall
	This night I schal be mordred ther I lye.	This night I shall be murder'd where I lie!
	Now help me, deere brother, or I dye;	Now help me, in all haste, before I die.
	In alle haste com to me,' he sayde.	In all haste come to me, my comrade dear.'
started up	This man out of his slep for fere abrayde;	The man woke up at once, through very fear.
	But whan that he was wakned of his sleep,	But when he was awake, and thought it o'er,
heed	He tornede him, and took of this no keep;	Turn'd in his bed, and heeded it no more,
	Him thoughte his dreem nas but a vanité.	So sure that dreams were only vanity.—
	Thus twies in his sleepyng dremede he.	And thus twice in his slumbers dreamèd he.

Glossary.		
	And atte thridde tyme yet his felawe	And a third time that night, his mate again
	Com, as him thoughte, and sayde, 'I	Came (as he thought), and said, 'I am
slain	am now slawe;	now slain;
	Bihold my bloody woundes, deepe and wyde!	Look at my bloody wounds so deep and wide!
arise	Aris up erly in the morwe tyde,	Rise up, thou, early in the morning tide;
	And at the west gate of the toun,' quod he,	And at the west gate of the town' (said he),
shalt thou	'A carte ful of donge there schaltow see,	'A cart of dung thou there shalt surely see,
	In which my body is hyd ful prively;	In which my body is hidden privily:
that, stop	Do thilke carte arresten boldely.	Do thou arrest that dung-cart sturdily.
	My gold causede my mordre, soth to sayn.'	My money caused my murder, it is plain.'
	And tolde him every poynt how he was slayn,	And told him every point how he was slain
hue	With a ful pitous face, pale of hewe.	With a full piteous face, all pale of hue.
	And truste wel, his dreem he fond ful trewe;	And mark you well, this vision he found true.
	For on the morwe, as sone as it was day,	For on the morrow, as soon as it was day,
inn	To his felawes in he took the way;	Towards his fellow's inn he took his way.
	And whan that he cam to this oxe stalle,	And when he came into the oxen's stall,
	After his felawe he bigan to calle.	Unto his fellow he began to call.
ostler	The hostiler answerede him anoon,	The hostler replied to him anon,
	And sayde, 'Sire, youre felawe is agoon,	Saying, 'Sir, your companion is gone.
	Als soone as day he wente out of the toun.'	As soon as daylight came he left the town.'
	This man gan falle in gret suspecioun,	Then in his mind fell dire suspiciön;
	Remembring on his dremes that he mette,	Remembering the vision he had seen;
	And forth he goth, no lenger wolde he	And he went forth with speed and
delay	lette,	troubled mien
	Unto the west gate of the toun, and	Unto the west gate of the city—and
found	fond	
manure	A dong carte, as it wente to donge lond,	A dung-cart, going to manure the land
	That was arrayed in that same wise	He found there—placed and shapen in such wise
describe	As ye han herd the deede man devise;	As you have heard the dead man's wraith devise.
began	And with an hardy herte he gan to crie	And with a hardy heart he 'gan to cry
	Vengeaunce and justice of this felonye.	Vengeance and justice on this felony.
	'My felawe mordred is this same night,	'My fellow murder'd is this very night
at full length	And in this carte he lith gapinge upright.	And in this cart his body lies outright!

GLOSSARY.		
	I crye ðut on the ministres,' quod he,	I cry out on the officers' (quoth he),
should rule	'That schulde kepe and reule this cité;	'Who ought to guard the town's security!
lieth	Harrow![1] allas! her lith my felawe slayn!'	Harrow! help, help! here lies my fellow dead.'
	What scholde I more unto this tale sayn?	Now what shall further in this tale be said?
	The peple outsterte, and caste the carte to grounde,	The people started forth, cast to the ground
	And in the middel of the dong thay founde	The cart, and in the midst of it they found
newly	The dede man, that mordred was al newe.	The dead man, murder'd, with his wounds all new.
blessed	O blisful God, that art so just and trewe!	—O, blessed God, Thou art most just and true!
betrayest	Lo, how that thou bywreyest mordre alway!	Lo, how Thou makest clear a crime alway!
	Mordre wil out, that se we day by day.	Murder will out, infallibly, I say.
loathsome	Mordre is so wlatsom and abhominable	Murder's so black and so abominable
	To God, that is so just and resonable,	To God, Who is so just and reasonable,
hidden	That he ne wol nought suffre it hiled be;	That He will never let it cover'd be:
	Though it abyde a yeer, or tuo, or thre,	Though it be hid a year, or two, or three,
	Mordre wil out, this my conclusioun	Murder will out, and that is ever shown.
	And right anoon, the mynistres of that toun	—And speedily the officers of that town
arrested	Han hent the cartere, and so sore him	Caught hostler and carter, those vile
punished	pyned,	men,
	And eek the hostiler so sore him	And tortured them (as was the
racked	engyned,[2]	manner then)
confessed	That thay biknewe here wikkednesse anoon,	Till they confessed their wickedness anon:
hanged	And were anhonged by the nekke boon.	And they were hangèd both, by the neck bone.

Thus every one may see that dreams are not for nothing. And there is another proof of it I can tell you:—

	Tuo men that wolde han passed over see	Two travellers, who would have crost the sea
	For certeyn cause into a fer contré,	On trading matters, to a far countree,
	If that the wynd ne hadde ben contrarie.	Had not the wind a while contrary blown,
	That made hem in a cité for to tarie,	Which made them tarry in a certain town
pleasantly	That stood ful merye upon an haven syde.	That lay convenient, on the haven's side.
against	But on a day, agayn the even tyde,	But on a later day, towards eventide

[1] *Harrow*: a cry of distress; hence our word *harrowing* for an event of great horror.

[2] Torture by some *engine*, such as the rack, then a legal form of examination.

GLOSSARY.		
wished	The wynd gan chaunge, and blew right as hem leste.	The wind began to change, and blew them fair.
	Jolyf and glad they wente unto here reste,	Gladly they went to rest, and to prepare
	And casten hem ful erly for to saylle;	All things in readiness, early for to sail.
one, great	But to that oon man fel a gret mervaylle.	But to the one of them, a marvel fell!
	That oon of hem in slepyng as he lay,	This one of them, asleep as there he lay,
wondrous, against	Him mette a wonder drem, agayn the day;	Had a most wondrous dream before the day.
	Him thoughte a man stood by his beddes syde,	He thought, a man appear'd at his bed's side
	And him comaundede, that he schulde abyde,	Who bade him in that city to abide:
remain	And sayde him thus, 'If thou tomorwe wende,	Saying to him—'If thou to-morrow wend,
go	Thow schalt be dreynt; my tale is at an ende.'	Thou shalt be surely drowned, and there's an end.'
	He wook, and tolde his felawe what he mette,	He woke, and told his fellow of this warning
dreamt	And prayde him his viage for to lette;	Not to pursue this voyage in the morning;
	As for that day, he prayde him to abyde.	Begg'd him to wait, were it for but one day.
	His felawe that lay by his beddes syde,	His comrade, who alongside of him lay,
	Gan for to lawghe, and scornede him ful faste.	Laugh'd him to scorn, and mock'd his foolishness.
terrify	'No dreem,' quod he, 'may so myn herte agaste,	'No dream' (said he) 'shall so my heart oppress
delay business	That I wil lette for to do my thinges.	That I will shirk to do my business.
	. . . . .	. . . . .
	But sith I see that thou wilt her abyde,	But since I see that thou wilt here abide
lose through sloth	And thus forslouthe wilfully thy tyde,	And sacrifice the favourable tide,
rueth	God wot it reweth me, and have good day.'	Why, I am sorry for you—so good-day.'
	And thus he took his leve, and wente his way.	And thus he took his leave and went his way.

He sailed, and the whole ship and crew were lost!

Numerous other cases came to Chanticleer's mind. The dreams of Daniel and of Joseph; of Pharaoh of Egypt: the prophetic vision of Crœsus that he was set upon a tree, which signified that he would die by hanging; and many more, all of which he told to Pertilote, and which formed a good excuse not to accept her proffered doses.

	'And I saye forther-more,	'And I say furthermore
	That I ne telle of laxatives no store,	I, for one, set by medicines no store,
venomous	For thay ben venymous, I wot right wel;	They are all poison, physics are, I wot.
not a bit	I hem defye, I love hem nevere a del.	I defy physics: and I love them not.

GLOSSARY.		
stop	'Now let us speke of mirthe, and stynte al this;	Now let us think of mirth, and leave all this;
	Madame Pertelote, so have I blis,	Ah, charming Pertilote, so have I bliss!
one	Of o thing God hath sent me large grace;	Of one thing heaven hath granted me good grace!
	For whan I see the beauté of your face,	For when I see the beauty of your face,
	Ye ben so scarlet reed aboute your eyghen,	You are so sweetly scarlet round the eye,
eyes		
dread, die	It maketh al my drede for to deyghen.	It makes my nightly terrors wholly die.
	. . . . .	. . . . .
solace	I am so ful of joye and of solas	I am so full of joy and deep content
	That I defye bothe swevene and drem.'	That I defy both vision and bad dream!'
	And with that word he fleigh doun fro the beem,	And with that word he sprang from off the beam
perch		
hens	For it was day, and eek his hennes alle;	(For it was daylight) and his ladies all.
began	And with a chuk he gan hem for to calle,	And with a chuck he 'gan them each to call,
lying	For he hadde founde a corn, lay in the yerd.	For he had found a corn-grain in the yard.
Royal (*Ital.* reale)	Real he was, he was no more aferd;	Royal he stalked, no fears his pleasure marr'd,
	. . . . .	. . . . .
	He loketh as it were a grim lioun;	Like a grim lion he his glances throws,
	And on his toon he rometh up and doun,	And roameth up and down upon his toes
	Him deyneth not to sette his foot to grounde.	Scarce deigning to set foot upon the ground:
	He chukketh, whan he hath a corn i-founde,	He chucketh when he hath a corn-grain found;
	And to him rennen than his wives alle.	And then his hens towards him hasten all.
royal	Thus real, as a prince is in his halle,	Thus regal as a prince is in his hall
	Leve I this Chauntecleer.	Leave I this Chanticleer—

And I will tell you the adventure which happened to him.

	Byfel that Chauntecleer in al his pride,	It chanc'd that Chanticleer in all his pride,
	His seven wyves walkyng him by syde,	His seven wives all walking at his side,
beside		
	Caste up his eyghen to the brighte sonne,	Cast up his eyes under the blazing sun
	That in the signe of Taurus hadde i-ronne	Which in the sign of Taurus then had run
	Twenty degrees and oon, and somwhat more;	Twenty degrees and one and somewhat more.
nature	He knewe by kynde, and by noon other lore,	He knew by instinct and no other lore
	That it was prime,[1] and crew with blisful stevene.	That it was prime, and crew with all his might.
joyous cry		

[1] *Prime:* the end of the first quarter of the day, counting from six o'clock: *i.e.* nine o'clock: at about which hour the sun attained the altitude specified, 41°. Chaucer fixes the occurrences in this story on Friday, May 3. (Sun past 21° of Taurus), *Skeat.*

GLOSSARY.		
	'The sonne,' he sayde, 'is clomben up on hevene	'The sun,' he said, 'has climb'd the azure height
know	Fourty degrees and oon, and more i-wis.	Forty and one degrees, and more, I see.
	Madame Pertelote, my worldes blis,	Ah, Madame Pertilote, my pride and glee,
	Herkneth these blisful briddes how they synge,	Hark to the birds how merrily they sing,
	And seth the fressche floures how they springe;	And see the fair fresh flowers how they spring,
	Ful is myn hert of revel and solaas.'	My heart is fill'd with joy and dalliance!'
	But sodeinly him fel a sorweful caas;	—But suddenly befell a sorry chance
	For evere the latter ende of joye is wo.	For ever the latter end of joy is woe.
(Ger. *Gott*)	Got wot that worldly joye is soone ago;	God knows that earthly pleasure soon doth go.

Now let every wise man hearken: for this story is as true, I undertake to say, as the book of *Lancelot du Lake.*

	A col-fox, ful of sleigh iniquité,	A wicked fox, beyond all telling sly
lived (Ger. *wohnen*)	That in the grove hadde woned yeres thre,	(That had for years dwelt in the grove hard by),
pre-arranged	By heigh ymaginacioun forncast,	By shrewd forethought, and by his skill accurst,
hedges	The same nighte thurghout the hegges brast	Right thro the hedge that very night had burst,
	Into the yerd, ther Chauntecleer the faire	Into the yard, where Chanticleer the fair
also	Was wont, and eek his wyves, to repaire;	Was, with his wives, wont daily to repair.
cabbages	And in a bed of wortes stille he lay,	And in a cabbage-bed conceal'd he lay,
afternoon	Til it was passed undern[1] of the day,	Till it was past the middle of the day,
	Waytyng his tyme on Chauntecleer to falle;	Waiting his time on Chanticleer to fall;
	As gladly doon these homicides alle,	As shrewdly as those sly assassins all
in wait, lie	That in awayte lyggen to mordre men.	Who calmly lie in wait to murder men.
	O false mordrer lurkyng in thy den!	O hideous murderer, lurking in thy den!
	O newe Scariot, newe Genilon![2]	O new Iscariot, new Genilon!
	False dissimulour, O Greek Sinon,	Falsest dissembler, second Greek Sinòn,
	That broughtest Troye al outrely to sorwe!	Who broughtest Troy-town utterly to sorrow!—
	O Chauntecleer, accursed be that morwe,	O Chanticleer, accursèd be that morrow
flew	That thou into that yerd floughe fro the bemes!	When for the yard thou daredst quit thy beam!

[1] *Undern*, the second quarter of the day, our 'forenoon,' began at nine o'clock, A.M., and ended at twelve.

[2] Sir Genilon, Gwenilon, or Gwines, one of Charlemagne's officers, whose treachery caused the defeat of Roncevaux, the death of Roland, &c., came to be regarded as the personification of perfidy. — Vide *Ellis's Specimens, The Romance of Sir Otriel.*

Glossary.		
warned	Thou were ful wel iwarned by thy dremes,	Thou hadst a certain warning in thy dream
	That thilke day was perilous to the.	That such a day were perilous to thee!
foreknows	But what that God forwot mot needes be.	However, what God wills, shall surely be.
	. . . . .	. . . . .
	I wol not han to do of such mateere;	I will not deal with such a matter here—
	My tale is of a cok, as ye schul heere,	My tale is of a cock, as you shall hear,
	That took his counseil of his wyf with	That foolishly took counsel of his
sorrow	sorwe,	wife
	To walken in the yerd upon the morwe,	To range the yard, and risk his precious life
	That he hadde met the drem, that I of	The day he dreamt his dream as I
told of	tolde.	have told.
	Wommennes counseils ben ful ofte colde;	A woman's counsel is too often cold:
	Wommannes counseil broughte us first to woo,	And woman's counsel brought us first to woe
	And made Adam fro paradys to go,	—Forced Adam out of Paradise to go
comfortable	Ther as he was ful merye, and wel at ese.	Where he enjoyed himself and lived in ease.
know, abbr. ne wot	But for I not, to whom it mighte displese,	But, as I know not whom I might displease
	If I counseil of wommen wolde blame.	If I on woman's counselling cast blame,
jest	Passe over, for I sayde it in my game.	Pass by my words—I said it but in game!
read	Red auctours, wher thay trete of such mateere,	Read authors on these matters, and you'll find
	And what thay sayn of wommen ye may heere.	All the nice things they say of womankind.
	These been the cokkes words, and not myne;	These are the cock's words only, and not mine:
know	I can noon harme of no womman divine.	I know no harm in woman, all-divine!
	Faire in the sond, to bathe hire merily,	Snug in the sand, to bathe her merrily
Lieth	Lith Pertelote, and alle hire sustres by,	Crouch'd Pertilote, with all her sisters by,
Against	Agayn the sonne; and Chauntecleer so free	Out in the sun: and Chanticleer so free
	Sang merier than the mermayde in the see; [1]	Sang sweetlier than the mermaid in the sea!
	. . . . .	. . . . .
	And so byfel that as he caste his eye,	And so befell that as he cast his eye
herbs	Among the wortes on a boterflye,	Over the cabbages, on a butterfly,
aware	He was war of this fox that lay ful lowe.	He chanced to see this fox that skulk'd below.
	No thing ne liste him thanne for to crowe,	No longer had he any wish to crow!

[1] The mermaids were said to sing so ravishingly that Ulysses was forced to lash himself to the mast in order to listen to them without springing overboard for joy.

Glossary.		
	But cryde anon, 'cok, cok,' and up he sterte,	But cried out 'Cock, cock!' and did backward start
	As man that was affrayed in his herte.	Like one affrighted to his very heart.
	For naturelly a beest desireth flee	For animals by nature try to flee
	Fro his contrarie, if he may it see,	From their own opposites, when such they see.
before, seen	Though he nevere erst hadde seyn it with his eye.	Though on it ne'er before they have set eye.
	This Chauntecleer, whan he gan him espye,	Now Chanticleer when he the thing did spy,
	He wolde han fled, but that the fox anon	He would have fled, but that the fox 'gan say
	Saide, 'Gentil sire, allas! wher wol ye goon?	'Alas, dear sir! why will you go away!
go	Be ye affrayd of me that am youre freend?	Are you afraid of me who am your friend?
	Now certes, I were worse than a feend,	Why, truly, I were worse than any fiend
	If I to yow wolde harm or vileynye.	If I to you meant harm or villany!
	I am nought come youre counsail for tespye.	I come not to disturb your privacy.
to spy	But trewely the cause of my comynge	I swear, my motive for thus entering
hearken	Was oonly for to herkne how that ye singe.	Was only just to hear how you can sing!
	For trewely ye have als merye a stevene,	Really, you have as beautiful a voice
cry	As eny aungel hath,[1] that is in hevene;	As any angel 'mid her skyey joys:
	Therwith ye han in musik morefelynge,	More feeling too for music is in you
Boethius	Than hadde Boece, or eny that can synge.	Than Boëce hath—or any one I know.
	My lord youre fader (God his soule blesse)	My lord your father—heaven rest his soul!
kindness	And eek youre moder of hire gentilesse	And your dear mother (whom I *must* extol),
been	Han in myn hous ibeen, to my gretese;	Have been my guests—to my sincere delight!
	And certes, sire, ful fayn wolde I yow plese.	And I would please you too, sir, if I might.
	But for men speke of syngyng, I wol saye,	But, talking about singing, I must say
enjoy the use of	So mot I brouke wel myn eyen twaye,	(Though I should lose my eyes for it to-day)
	Save you, I herde nevere man so synge,	Except your own I never heard such singing
	As dede youre fader in the morwenynge.	As your late father's, thro' the morning ringing.
certainly	Certes it was of herte al that he song.	'Twas from his heart—one felt—that power of song,
voice	And for to make his vois the more strong,	And then to make his vocal organs strong
take such pains	He wolde so peyne him, that with bothe his eyen	He would make such an effort, that each eye
	He moste wynke, so lowde he wolde crien,	He had to wink, so shrilly would he cry,

[1] A flatterer will go to any lengths of absurdity which his prey will suffer—can anything be more ludicrous than this simile?

GLOSSARY.		
	And stonden on his typtoon therwithal,	And stand upon his tiptoes there withal,
	And strecche forth his nekke long and smal.	And stretch out far his neck, so long and small.
also, discretion	And eek he was of such discrecioun,	So thorough was his knowledge of his art
was not	That ther nas no man in no regioun	That there was no one round, in any part,
	That him in song or wisdom mighte	Who him, in song and wisdom, could
surpass	passe.	surpass.
	I have wel rad in daun Burnel the Asse[1]	I've read in th' author of *Burnell the Ass*.
	Among his vers, how that there was a cok,	Among his poems, how there was a cock
because gave	For that a prestes sone yaf him a knok	Who, when a priest's son fetch'd him a sharp knock
	Upon his leg, whil he was yong and	Upon his leg, while he was young and
fastidious	nyce,	'nice,'
	He made him for to lese his benefice.	Made him for vengeance lose his benefice!—
	But certeyn ther nis no comparisoun	But truly there is no comparison
	Bitwix the wisdom and discrecioun	Between that cock and the discretiön
cunning	Of youre fader, and of his subtilté.	Of your late father—ah, how sharp was he!
	Now syngeth, sire, for seinte Charité,	Now, sing, sir—for the sake of charity—
	Let se, konne ye youre fader countrefete?'	Let's see, can you your father counterfeit?'
	This Chauntecleer his wynges gan to bete,	This Chanticleer began his wings to beat
could, treason	As man that couthe his tresoun	Like men who cannot fathom treachery:
	nought espye,	
perceive	So was he ravyssht with his flaterie.	He was so ravish'd at the flattery.

Alas! lordlings, many a flatterer and parasite is in your houses, who pleases you far more than those who tell you the truth!

	This Chauntecleer stood heighe upon his toos,	This Chanticleer stood high upon his toes
	Strecching his nekke, and held his eyghen cloos,	Stretching his neck, and shut his eyelids close,
	And gan to crowe lowde for the noones;	And 'gan to crow full loudly, for the nonce.
	And daun Russel the fox sterte up at oones,	And my lord Russell Fox starts up at once
throat caught	And by the garget hente Chauntecleer,	And by the throat he catches Chanticleer
	And on his bak toward the woode	And on his back towards the wood
bore	him beer.	doth bear!—
	For yit was ther no man that hadde	For, as it chanced, he had been seen
pursued	him sewed.	by none

[1] The reference is to the Latin satirical poem of Nigellus de Wireker, monk and precentor of Canterbury, written about the year 1190, and entitled *Burnellus sive Speculum Stultorum*.

Glossary.		
may'st escaped	O destiny, that maist not ben eschewed!	O Destiny! whom nobody can shun!
flew	Allas, that Chauntecleer fleigh fro the bemes!	Alas, that Chanticleer did quit the beams!
cared	Allas, his wif ne roughte nought of dremes!	Alas, his wife, who had no faith in dreams!
	And on a Friday fel al this meschaunce.	On Friday, too, to fall in such a plight!
	O Venus, that art goddesse of plesaunce,	Thou, Venus, that art goddess of delight,
since	Syn that thy servant was this Chauntecleer,	Seeing a slave of thine was Chanticleer,
	And in thy service dide al his poweer,	Who did his mightiest in thy service dear,
delight	More for delit, than world to multiplie,	(More for delight than increase of the race)
wouldst thou	Why woldestow suffre him on thy day to dye?[1]	Why let him perish on thy day of days?

So let us mourn for Chanticleer as for a king's death.

	Certes such cry ne lamentacioun	Sure, such a cry and lamentatiön
	Was nevere of ladies maad, whan Ilioun	Was never by ladies made—when Ilion
drawn	Was wonne, and Pirrus with his streite swerd,	Was won, and Pyrrhus with his sword appear'd,
	Whan he hadde hent kyng Priam by the berd,	And having caught King Priam by the beard
	And slayn him (as saith us *Eneydos*),[2]	Slew him (according to *Æneidos*)—
close (yard)	As maden alle the hennes in the clos,	As all the hens set up within the close
	Whan they hadde seyn of Chauntecleer the sighte.	On seeing Chanticleer's most mournful fall.
	But soveraignly dame Pertelote	But Pertilote she shriek'd above them
shrieked	schrighte,	all
	Ful lowder than dide Hasdrubales wyf;[3]	Much louder than did Hasdrubal's stern wife,
	Whan that hire housbonde hadde lost his lyf,	Who, when her noble husband lost his life,
burnt	And that the Romayns hadde i-brent Cartage,	And when the Romans had destroyed Carthage,
	Sche was so ful of torment and of rage,	Was stung with so despairing pain and rage,
	That wilfully into the fyr sche sterte,	That of her own will in the fire she darted,
	And brende hirselven with a stedefast herte.	And burned herself to death, the constant-hearted.
ye cried	O woful hennes, right so criden ye,	Poor hens! so loud your woful cries did come,
burned	As, whan that Nero brente the cité	Ev'n as, when Nero set the flames to Rome,

[1] Friday was sacred to Venus.
[2] Meaning Virgil in his *Æneidos*, lib. ii. 50, &c.
[3] For the story of 'Hasdrubaldes wife' see Livy, xlix. and l., and Eutropius.

Glossary.		
	Of Rome, criden senatoures wyves,	The senators' wives lamented loud and cried,
	For that here housbondes losten alle here lyves;	Because their noble consorts all had died;
guilt	Withouten gult this Nero hath hem slayn.	Guiltless by Nero's order were they slain.—
	Now wol I torne to my tale agayn.	Now will I turn unto my tale again.
simple	This sely wydwe, and eek hire doughtres tuo,	The simple widow, and her daughters two,
	Herden these hennes crie and maken wo,	Hearing the hens cry out and make ado,
at once	And out at dores sterten they anoon,	Out at the door all three ran out anon
	And seyen the fox toward the grove goon,	And saw the fox who toward the wood had gone,
	And bar upon his bak the cok away;	And on his back did bear the cock away.
	They criden, 'Out! harrow and weylaway!	Then cried they all, 'Harro, and well away.
	Ha, ha, the fox!' and after him thay ran,	Ho! ho! the fox!' and after him they ran,
	And eek with staves many another man;	And eek with staves came many another man.
	Ran Colle[1] our dogge, and Talbot, and Garlond,	Ran Colle our dog, and Talbot, and Garland,
country wench	And Malkyn[2] with a distaf in hire hond;	And Malkin, with the distaff in her hand;
	Ran cow and calf, and eek the verray hogges	Ran cow and calf, and e'en the very hogs,
afraid	So were they fered for berkyng of the dogges	So scared were they by barking of the dogs
	And schowtyng of the men and wymmen eke,	And shouting of the men and women there—
	Thay ronne so hem thoughte here herte breke.	They ran as though their hearts would break for fear:
	Thay yelleden as feendes doon in helle;	They yelled as all the devils do in hell;
ducks	The dokes criden as men wolde hem	The ducks squeal'd as at point of
kill	quelle;	death—pell-mell,
	The gees for fere flowen over the trees;	The geese for fear flew off across the trees;
	Out of the hyves cam the swarm of bees;	Out of the hive buzz'd swarms of frightened bees,
	So hidous was the noyse, a *benedicite!*	So hideous was the noise—*Benedicite!*
that	Certes he Jakke Straw,[5] and his meyné,	Jack Straw himself and all his company
	Ne maden nevere schoutes half so schrille,	Did never utter shouts one half as shrill
	Whan that thay wolden eny Flemyng kille,	For any Flemish foe they wished to kill
	As thilke day was maad upon the fox.	As that one day was made about the fox.

[1] Colley.

[2] Malkin, or Mawkin, the common name of a girl, afterwards degraded: may have been derived from '*mädchen.*'

[5] The insurrection of Jack Straw is here alluded to. 'Fleming' may refer to John of *Gaunt.*

GLOSSARY.		
	Of bras thay broughten beemes, and of box,	They brought out horns of brass, and horns of box,
	Of horn, of boon, in whiche thay	Of horn, of bone—in which they blew
trumpeted	blewe and powpede	and poop'd,
	And therwithal thay schrykede and	And with it all they shrieked, and
whooped	thay howpede ; [1]	howled and whooped,
	It semede as that hevene schulde falle.	It seemed as tho' the very sky would fall.
	Now, goode men, I praye yow herk-neth alle ;	And now, good people, pray you listen all :
	Lo, how fortune torneth sodeinly	How fickle Fortune turneth suddenly
	The hope and pride eek of hire enemy !	The hope and triumph of her enemy !
	This cok that lay upon the foxes bak,	This cock that lay upon the fox's back,
	In al his drede, unto the fox he spak,	Spite of his terror, to the fox he spake,
	And saide, ' Sire, if that I were as ye,	And said, ' Good sir, if I were only you,
should	Yet schulde I sayn (as wis God helpe me),	Now would I laugh and halloo to the crew,
again	Turneth ayein, ye proude cherles alle !	Turn back ! go to, you churls and women all !
	A verray pestilens upon yow falle !	A very murrain on your folly fall !
	Now am I come unto this woodes syde,	Now I have got as far as this wood's side,
in spite of you	Maugre youre heed, the cok schal heer abyde ;	In spite of you the cock shall here abide !
at once	I wol him ete in faith, and that anoon.'	For I will eat him, and that quickly too ! '
	The fox answerde, ' In faith, it schal be doon.'	The fox cried out, ' I' faith, and so I'll do ! '
	And as he spak that word, al sodeinly	And suddenly while uttering the word,
	This cok brak from his mouth de-lyverly,	Out of his jaws darted the nimble bird,
nimbly		
high, flew	And heigh upon a tree he fleigh anoon.	And flew for safety up into a tree.
	And whan the fox seigh that he was i-goon,	And when the fox perceived that he was free,
	' Allas ! ' quod he, ' O Chauntecleer, allas !	' Alas,' he said, ' O Chanticleer, alas !
	I have to yow,' quod he, ' y-don trespas,	I am afraid,' quoth he, ' my conduct was
	In-as-moche as I makede yow aferd,	Offensive, since I frightened you I see,
	Whan I yow hente, and broughte out of the yerd ;	By catching you, to bring you here with me.
wicked	But, sire, I dede it in no wikke entente ;	But, sir, I did so with no ill intent :
	Com doun, and I schal telle yow what I mente.	Come down, and I will tell you what I meant.
	I schal seye soth to yow, God help me so.'	I shall speak truth, so help me'—thus and thus.
curse	' Nay than,' quod he, ' I schrewe us bothe tuo,	' Nay then ' (quoth he) ' beshrew the two of us,

[1] A far-reaching sound, hence ' *whoop !* ' in hide-and-seek, and *whooving* cough.

GLOSSARY.		
	And first I schrewe myself, bothe blood and boones,	And first beshrew myself, both blood and bones,
beguile	If thou bigile me any ofter than oones.	If thou dost cheat me oftener than once!
	Thou schalt no more, thurgh thy flaterye,	Nay, not again shalt thou with flattery
Make (Fr. *faire*)	Do me to synge and wynke with myn eye	Tempt me to sing, and sing, and wink my eye.
	For he that wynketh, whan he scholde see,	For he that winketh when he ought to see,
thrive	Al wilfully, God let him never the!'	God let him never thrive—a fool is he.
	'Nay,' quod the fox, 'but God yive him meschaunce,	'Nay' (cried the fox), 'God give the fool mischance
imprudent	That is so undiscret of governaunce,	Who is so lacking in self-governance
	That jangleth whan he scholde holde his pees.'	He chatters when he ought to hold his tongue.'
reckless	Lo, such it is for to be reccheles,	Lo, here we see the folly and the wrong
negligent	And necgligent, and truste on flaterie.	Of weak reliance on a flattering lip.
folly	But ye that holden this tale a folye,	But ye who hold this tale an idle quip
	As of a fox, or of a cok and hen,	Of a mere fox, or a mere cock and hen,
	Taketh the moralité therof, goode men.	Take up the moral of it, prudent men!

HERE ENDS THE 'NUN'S PRIEST'S TALE.'

NOTES BY THE WAY.

[The admirable tale of Chanticleer and his successful manner of outwitting Reynard was probably a floating popular *fabliau*, like others used by Chaucer to sharpen his own tools of satire and delicious humour upon. Tyrwhitt supposes he derived it from the fifty-first fable in the collection translated by Marie, authoress of *The Laies*, from the Anglo-Saxon of King Alfred. Mr. Wright believes he took it from the fifth chapter of the *Roman de Renart*, entitled 'Si comme Renart Prist Chanticler le Coc.' The handling of the story is, however, unmistakably Chaucer's. The amusing skill with which he invests the farmyard denizens with a human interest might be called Landseerian, were not Landseer so tardy a successor of Chaucer—at any rate, the gift in both artists is one, under different forms. The idea of Chanticleer singing harmoniously a popular song ('My liefe is faren on londe' was probably as familiar as 'Good-bye, Sweet-heart') is an instance very comic in itself, but founded on the knowledge that cocks do greatly differ in voice, some possessing definite musical notes. And may not the description of fair Partlet's very thorough but somewhat confused system of domestic medicine, point to possible experience of woman's immortal *penchant* for 'dosing' and man's mortal dread of 'remedies?'

One of the subtlest touches in this story is the fact that Chanticleer in the very midst of his terror was struck by the ludicrous side of the position of himself and his pursuers. In great sorrow, or in imminent peril, how often does the mind fasten on trifles or recoil back upon inverted points of view in a degree scarcely credible! Chaucer's profound comprehension of human nature is one of his chiefest charms.]

THE MAN OF LAW'S TALE.

OUR Host saw that the time was getting on, for the shade of every tree was the same in length as the erect trunk.

GLOSSARY.		
	'Sir Man of Lawe,' quod he, 'so have ye blisse,	'Sir Man of Law,' (quoth he) 'so have ye bliss,
fore-word (warning)	Telle us a tale anon, as forward is.'	Tell us a story, as the promise is.'
	. . . .	. . . .
	'Hoste,' quod he, '*de par Dieux* I assente	'Host,' answered he, '*de par dieux* I assent.
covenant	To breke forward is nat myn entent.	To break a promise is not my intent.
	Byheste is dette. . . .	A promise is a debt. . . .
	. . . But natheles certayn	. . . But still, I fear,
	I can right now non other tale seyn,	I cannot tell you any story here,
roughly	That Chaucer,[1] thay he can but lewedly	But Chaucer (though but little skill has he
	On metres and on rymyng certeynly	In metre and in rhyming, certainly,)
them	Hath seyd hem in such Englisch as he can,	Has told it, in such language as he can,
	Of olde tymes as knoweth many a man.	A long time since, as knoweth many a man.
them	And yif he have nought sayd hem, leeve brother,	And if he has not told it, my dear brother,
one	In o bok, he hath seyd hem in another.'	In one book, he has told it in another.'
	. . . .	. . . .
	And with that word, he with a sobre cheere	So saying, with a very sober air,
	Bigan his tale, as ye schal after heere.	Began his tale, as I shall let you hear.

PART I.

ONCE on a time there dwelt in Syria a company of rich chapmen or traders, steady and honest, who dealt far and wide in spicery, cloths of gold, and rich-hued satins. Their goods were so reasonable in price, and so novel in kind, that everybody desired to chaffer with them.[2]

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[1] These personal remarks, ostensibly made in Chaucer's presence *incog.* bear out the old practice of introducing portraits in every branch of art. Mediæval painters constantly introduced their own portraits—it was a primitive form of advertisement.

[2] At a time when such establishments as drapers did not exist, and newspapers and the post-office were unknown, the only means of acquiring foreign goods was through companies of 'merchants' and travelling chapmen (sometimes a form of

It happened that the master-traders of the company went to visit Rome, where they sojourned for some time; and where the good fame of the emperor's daughter, Constance, perpetually came to their ears.

This was the common voice throughout Rome: 'Our emperor[1] (God bless him!) hath a daughter, that since the world began hath never had her like for beauty or for goodness. Pray God sustain her in honour, and would she were the queen of all Europe!'

GLOSSARY.		
high greenness (immaturity)	In hir is hey beautee, with-oute pryde, Yowthe, with-oute grenehede or folye;	In her is noble beauty without pride, Youth without foolishness and levity;
humility	To alle hir werkes vertu is hir gyde, Humblesse hath slayn in hir al tirannye.	In all her doings virtue is her guide, Her humble spirit knows not tyranny:
	She is mirour[2] of alle curteisye;	She is the mirror of all courtesy:
very	Hir herte is verray chambre of holynesse,	Her heart the shrine of every holy thing;
liberality	Hir hand, ministre of fredom for almesse.	Her hand free minister in almsgiving.

The common voice spoke truth, as God is true;[3] and the merchants, having seen this fairest maiden, turned their ships homeward, and returned to Syria.

These traders stood high in the esteem of their Sultan, for when they returned from any strange land, he would receive them and question them, eager for tidings of the various kingdoms they had visited, and of such wonders as they might have seen or learned.

Among other things the traders told the Sultan of Constance, her marvellous beauty and goodness, so earnestly that the Sultan conceived a rooted passion to see and to possess her.

Peradventure	Parauenture in thilke large book	It may be that in yonder mighty Book
	Which that men clepe the heuen,[4] ywriten was	Which men do call the heavens, there written was
	With sterres, whan that he his birthe took,	With stars—what time his fleshly birth he took—
have	That he for loue shulde han his deth, allas!	That he for love should meet his death, alas!
	For in the sterres, clerer than is glas,	For in the stars above, more clear than glass,
could	Is writen, god wot, who so coude it rede,	Is written, God wot, whoso can spell it out,
death never fear!	The deth of euery man, withouten drede.[5]	The fate of every man, beyond a doubt.

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pedlar), who, of course, were retailers of news and gossip as well as other things, and often were very well-to-do and much respected. The position of a merchant may be gathered from the order of precedence observed in John Russell's *Boke of Nurture*, in which the merchant sat below the knight, but above a 'gentilman.'

[1] Gower calls this emperor Tiberius Constantine, who was Emperor (not of Rome, but) of the East, A.D. 578, and was succeeded, as in the story, by Maurice, A.D. 582. His capital was Constantinople, whither merchants from Syria could easily repair; but the greater fame of Rome caused the substitution of the western for the eastern capital. [Skeat.]

[2] All the culture of her time was reflected in her as in a mirror.

[3] This expression recalls the proverb, *Vox populi, vox Dei.*

[4] *V* and *u* must be understood to be convertible letters.

[5] Astrology, or the science of prophesying

The Sultan assembled his privy council, and, addressing them, declared his intent to make Constance his wife; for unless he succeeded in winning her he was but a dead man; and he charged them to shape some remedy for his life.

Divers men said divers things. They argued, cast up and down the difficulties; many a subtle reason was brought forward, magic and sorcery were hinted at, but in the end they saw that there could be but one remedy—marriage.

The chief obstacle was, as they all knew, that no Christian prince would be likely to wed his child under the sweet law of Allah's prophet, the gulf between the two nations in laws and habits was so great.

GLOSSARY.		
lose	And he answerde, 'rather than I lese	But he made answer, 'Rather than to lose
christened	Custance, I wol be cristned doutelees;	Constance, I will be Christian like my wife:
	I mot ben hires, I may non other chese.	I must be hers, none other could I choose.
peace	I prey yow holde youre arguments in pees;	I pray you cease the argument and strife,
Save	Saueth my lyf, and beth nought recchelees	Be not indifferent to save my life
reckless	To getten hir that hath my lyf in cure;	In winning her who holds it in her hand;
	For in this wo I may not longe endure.'	For longer can I scarce my wo withstand.'
dilating	What nedeth gretter dilatacioun?	What needeth further explanatiòn?
	I seye, by tretys and embassadrye,	I say, by treaties and by embassy,
	And by the popes mediacioun,	And by the Pope's own mediatiòn,
	And al the chirche, and al the chiualrye,	And all the Church, and all the chivalry,
	That, in destruccioun of Maumettrye,	For the destruction of Mahometry,
increase	And in encrees of cristes lawe dere,	And for the furtherance of Christ's law dear
agreed	They ben accorded, so as ye shal here.	All were at one accord: as ye shall hear.

The conditions of the treaty between the nations were that the Sultan, and his baronage and lieges, should receive holy baptism, and Constance, with a certain sum of dowry, should become his wife.

Now would some men give me time, I would tell all the cost and labour spent by the Roman emperor in shaping her outfitting for this ill-assorted marriage. Many bishops, lords, ladies, knights of renown, and other folk, were commanded to attend her to Syria, and the whole city joined in praying Christ that His blessing might rest on this marriage, and on the journey thither.

When the woeful, fatal day came for her departure to her heathen home, pale Constance, overcome with sorrow, arose and robed herself to fare forth, for well she knew there was no help for it.

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by the stars, was a popular study, and we find many allusions to it in Chaucer. He means here, the fate of every man is reflected in advance and legible upon the planets, as in a mirror—to whoso is clever enough to decipher it.

GLOSSARY.		
	The day is comen of hir departing, I sey, the woful day fatal is come,[1] That ther may be no lenger tarying,	The day arriveth, for her journeyings, I say, the grievous, fatal day is come, When there may be no longer tarrying:
prepared themselves	But forthward they hem dressen, alle and some; Custance, that was with sorwe al ouercome, Ful pale arist, and dresseth hir to wende; For wel she seeth ther is non other ende.	Now they are pressing forward, all and some. Constance, who was with sorrow overcome, Full pale arose, and brac'd herself to wend. For well she knew there was no other end.
	Allas! what wonder is it though she wepte,	Alas! what wonder is it that she wept?
nation	That shal be sent to strange nacioun	Sent to a strange land and a cloudy fate
	Fro frendes, that so tendrely hir kepte,	From friends who all her tender life have kept,
under	And to be bounden vnder subieccioun	And bound in long subjection to a mate
	Of oon, she knoweth not his condicioun.	Unseen, unknown, save that his lot is great:
	Housbondes ben alle goode, and han ben yore,	Well—husbands are all good—have been of yore—
	That knowen wyues, I dar say yow no more.	Perhaps: their wives know best: I say no more.
	'Fader,' she sayde, 'thy wrecched child Custance,	'Father,' she said, 'Constance, thy mournful child,
	Thy yonge doughter, fostred vp so softe,	Thy little daughter foster'd up so soft—
greatest joy	And ye, my mooder, my souerayn plesance	And you my mother, to me most dear and mild
accepting	Ouer alle thing, out-taken crist on lofte,	Above all others (saving Christ aloft)—
	Custance, your child, hir recomandeth ofte	Constance your child herself commendeth oft
	Vn-to your grace, for I shal to Surryë,	Unto your grace. To Syria go I
	Ne shal I neuer seen yow more with yë.	Haply to see you never more with eye.
	Allas! vn-to the Barbre nacioun	'Alas, unto the barbarous natiòn
go	I moste gon, sin than it is your wille;	I must fare forth, since it is now your will;
died	But crist, that starf for our sauacioun,	But Christ Who died for our salvatiòn
	So yeue me grace, his hestes to fulfille;	So give me grace His mission to fulfil,
no matter if I die	I, wrecche womman, no fors though I spille.	I, wretched woman, dead or living still!

[1] These strong expressions applied to a marriage which was not wrong, and might lead to much good, are attributable to the violence of religious prejudice first, and secondly to the reasonable belief that marriage between persons having nothing in common in any way is not likely to be very happy. Moreover, girls then, as now on the Continent, had to marry as they were bidden, —often husbands they had never seen, and the wrench from home and all past associations would be tremendously greater 500 years ago than in these days. *Hinc illæ lacrymæ*- -Constance's.

Glossary.		
	Wommen are born to thraldom and penance,	Women are born to pain and slavery,
government	And to ben vnder mannes gouernance.'[1]	And to be under man's supremacy.'

Not at Troy when Pyrrhus broke the wall, not when Theseus burned the City of Thebes, nor at Rome for the harm wrought through thrice vanquished Hannibal, was ever such weeping as for Constance's departing; but go she must, whether she weep or sing.

Was there no prophet in the town? Was there no philosopher to counsel the safest hour when this might be? Imprudent emperor! The fit precautions were not taken before this inauspicious act.

on board	To shippe is brought this woful faire mayde	Aboard they bring this fair and mournful maid,
	Solempnely with euery circumstance.	With every fit and solemn circumstance:
	'Now Iesu crist be with yow alle,' she sayde,	'Now Jesu Christ be with you all,' she said—
	Ther nis no more but 'farewel! faire Custance!'	There is no more but 'farewell, fair Constance!'
takes pains	She peyneth hir to make good countenance,	Striving to wear a cheerful countenance,
	And forth I lete hir sayle in this manere,	Thus into Syria I let her sail:
	And turne I wol agayn to my matere.	And I will turn again unto my tale.

Now the mother of the Sultan, wel of vices she! perceived her son's intention to forego the ancient sacrifices,[2] and summoned her council, who gathered around her to learn what she meant; and being assembled, she sat her down and spoke as follows:—

	'Lordes,' quod she, 'ye knowen	'Lords,' did she cry, 'ye well know,
everyone	euerichon,	every man,
	How that my sone in point is for to	How that my son is now in point to
prevent	lete	let
	The holy lawes of oure Alkaron,[3]	And quit the holy laws of Alkoràn,
messenger	Yeuen by goddes messager Makomete.	Given by God's own prophet Màhomet:
avowal	But oon auow to grete god I hete,	But one firm vow before high God I set,
	The lyf shal rather out of my body sterte	The life shall rather from my body part,
	Than Makometes lawe out of myn herte!	Than Màhomet's law shall pass from out my heart.

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[1] See note, p. 160.

[2] The Mohammedan religion does not admit the idea of a sacrifice or atonement; but all false religions were confounded in the popular mind. [Bell.]

[3] 'The Koran (Arabic, *Al Koran*) was translated into Latin in the twelfth century, and to the intercourse which at this period was kept up between the people of Europe and the Arabs, Mr. Hallam attributes the great, though secret, progress of scepticism which may be traced in a continually increasing stream through the literature of the middle ages.' See Hallam, *Lit. of the Middle Ages*, vol. i.

Glossary.		
us betide	What shulde vs tyden of this newe lawe	What shall betide us of this new-made law
	But thraldom to our bodies and penance?	But thraldom to our body and strange pain?
	And afterward in helle to be drawe	And afterward to deepest hell we draw
denied, faith	For we reneyed Mahoun[1] our creance?	For holding of God's prophet in disdain?—
	But, lordes, wol ye maken assurance,	Lords, will you make assurance clear and plain
	As I shal seyn, assenting to my lore,	According to any word and to my lore?
	And I shal make vs sauf for euermore?'	And I shall make us safe for evermore.'

They swore assent, every man of them, to stand by her, and live and die with her; promised all help in her endeavour, and listened with devotion to the scheme she laid before them.

make believe	'We shul first feyne vs cristendom to take,	'We shall first feign us Christendom to take:
	Cold water shal not greue vs but a lyte;[2]	Cold water will not hurt us—not a mite—
little	And I shal swich a feste and reuel make,	And such a feast and revel I shall make
believe, requite	That, as I trowe, I shal the sowdan quyte.	As lulls the Sultan to a blind delight:
	For though his wyf be cristned neuer so whyte,	For though his wife be christened never so white,
	She shal haue nede to wasshe awey the rede,	She shall have need to wash away the red,
	Though she a font-ful water with hir lede.'	Though she a fount of water with her led!'
	O sowdanesse, rote of iniquitee,	O Sultaness! root of iniquities!
	Virago, thou Semyram the secounde,	Second Semiramis, virago crown'd!
feminine shape	O serpent vnder femininitee,	O serpent under woman's tender guise,
	Lyk to the serpent[3] depe in helle ybounde,	Like to the Serpent deep in hell i-bound!
	O feyned womman, al that may confounde	O thou feigned-woman, all that may confound
	Vertu and Innocence, thurgh thy malice,	Virtue and innocence, through thy malice deep,
	Is bred in thee, as nest of euery vice!	Is bred in thee—nest where all vices sleep!
since that	O Satan, enuious sin thilke day	O Satan, envious since the day
	That thou were chased fro our heritage,[4]	That thou wert chased from out our heritage,
knowest thou	Wel knowestow to wommen the olde way!	Well knew'st thou unto woman the old way!

[1] The name was variously spelt, Mahomet, Makomete, Mahound, &c., spelling being largely phonetic.

[2] To receive baptism: the cold water would not injure them as Mohammedans.

[3] This is a very curious allusion: it refers to the old belief that the serpent who tempted Eve appeared to her *with a woman's head*: and it is not seldom so represented. For the motive of all this vituperation see 'Notes by the Way,' p. 161.

[4] Luke x. 18; Rev. xii.

GLOSSARY.

Eve	Thou madest Eua bring vs in seruage.	Thou mad'st Eve bring us into servitage;
ruin	Thou wolt fordoon this cristen mariage.	Thou wilt undo this Christian marriage;
	Thy instrument so, weylawey the whyle!	Thine instrument so (wellaway the while)
Makest thou	Makestow of wommen, whan thou wolt begyle.	Mak'st thou of woman, when thou would'st beguile!

This Sultaness, whom I thus denounce and chide, let privily her council go their way, and rode to the Sultan, whom she told that she would withdraw her opposition to the marriage, and accept Christianity at the priest's hands; for she repented her that she had so long continued an heathen: also begging that she might receive the Christian folk at a great banquet, whereat she would do her utmost to please them. The Sultan, delighted at his mother's words, consented gladly, scarce knowing how to express his pleasure. She kissed her son and left him.

PART II.

THE Christian company arrived at last, and the Sultan and the Sultan's mother received Constance with all honour; nay, the greeting of the Sultaness was as warm as a mother's to her daughter. The assemblage was more royal and splendid than words can say; but beneath all this outward show, this scorpion of a Sultaness was for all her flattering prepared most mortally to sting. Then came the great banquet which the Sultaness had made, and to which went all the Christian folk together; yea, both young and old. Here may men feast, and behold regal magnificence, and more dainties than I can tell; but all too dear they bought it ere they rose!

	O sodeyn wo! that euer art successour	O sudden woe, that ever art arriving
	To worldly blisse, spreynd is[1] with bitternesse;	On pleasure's heels! blent is with bitterness
The end	Thende of the ioye of our worldly labour;	The end of the joy of all our earthly striving!
Woe, end (Fr. *fin*)	Wo occupieth the fyn of our gladnesse.	Pain bringeth up the rear of pleasantness:
security	Herke this conseil for thy sikernesse,	Hearken this warning for thy heedfulness:
	Vp-on thy glade day haue in thy mynde	Upon thy glad day bear within thy mind
unknown	The vnwar wo or harm that comth bihynde.	The unware woe of harm that cometh behind.
	For shortly for to tellen at a word,	For shortly to narrate it in a word,
	The sowdan and the cristen euerichone	The Sultan, with the Christians every one,
stabbed	Ben al tohewe and stiked at the bord,	Are all down-hewed and slaughter'd at the board,

[1] Tyrwhitt.

GLOSSARY.

except

But it were only dame Custance allone.
This olde sowdanesse, this cursed crone,
Hath with her frendes doon this cursed dede,
For she hir-self wolde al the contree lede.

Saving dame Constance who was spared alone.
The fierce old Sultaness, that cursed crone,
Hath with her people done this cursed deed;
For she herself would all the country lead.

Nor was

Ne ther was Surryen noon that was conuerted

And there was no converted Syrian

knew

That of the conseil of the sowdan wot,[1]

Who of the Sultan's counsel was, or wot,

was not, escaped

That he nas al tohewe er he asterted.

But was hewn down in flying, man by man;

And Custance han they take anon, foot-hot,[2]
And in a shippe al sterelees, god wot,
They han hir set, and bidde hir lerne sayle

And Constance have they caught away, foot-hot,
And in a ship without a steer (God wot)
They have her set, and bade her learn to sail

Italy

Out of Surrye agaynward to Itayle.

Away from Syria, back into Itaille.

A certein tresor that she thider ladde,

A certain treasure that she brought with her

victual

And, soth to sayn, vitaille gret plentee

And food (to do them justice) plenteously

have, given

They han hir yeuen, and clothes eek she hadde,
And forth she sayleth in the salte see.

They gave to her, clothes had she moreover,
And forth she saileth over the salt sea.

O my Custance, ful of benignytee,
O emperoures yonge doughter dere,

O royal Constance, fill'd with charity,
O daughter of a king, so young, so dear,

He that is lord of fortune be thy stere!

May He who ruleth fortune be thy steer!

rudder

She blesseth hir,[3] and with ful pitous voys

She blest herself, with voice most piteous;

cross (Fr. *croix*)

Vn-to the croys of crist thus seyde she,
'O cleere, o welful auter, holy croys,
Reed of the lambes blood full of pitee,

Unto the cross of Christ then thus spake she—
'O dear, O wealthful Altar, holy Cross
Red with the Lamb's blood, full of clemency,

That wesh the world fro the olde iniquitee,

That wash'd the world fro' the old iniquity,

from

Me fro the feend, and fro his clawes kepe
That day that I shal drenchen in the depe.

From the foul fiend and from his claws me keep,
That day when I shall drown within the deep!

[1] Who was of the Sultan's opinions, or knew them.

[2] The phrase 'hot-foot,' signifying the following up any pursuit instantly or quickly, is still common among the peasantry of Ireland. Tyrwhitt says the French '*haut le pied*' has the same signification. Gower uses the expression 'fote-hote.'

[3] To bless oneself is making the sign of the cross on the forehead and breast as an

GLOSSARY.

all that is true	Victorious tree, proteccioun of trewe,	Victorious Tree! protection of all Truth,
	That only worthy were for to bere	And Tree that only worthy wert to bear
	The king of heuen with his woundes newe,	The King of Heaven, with his wounds new ruth—
	The whyte lomb, that hurt was with the spere,	(The fair white Lamb that hurt was with a spear,
fiends	Flemer of feendes out of hym and here,[1]	Caster of devils out of him and her)
	On which thy lymes feithfully extenden,	On which Thy limbs do faithfully extend,
give to amend	Me keep, and yif me myght my lyf tamenden.'	Keep me, and give me might my life to mend.'
floated	Yeres and dayes fleet this creature	For years and days doth float the fair Constance
	Thurghout the see of Grece vn-to the strayte	Throughout the sea of Greece, unto the strait
Morocco, adventure	Of Marrok, as it was hir auenture;	Of far Morocco, as the ship doth chance;
	On many a sory meel now may she bayte;[2]	Full many a sorry supper shall she eat.
	After her deeth ful often may she wayte,	After her death long shall her body wait
	Er that the wilde wawes wole hir dryue	Until the wild waves fitfully may drive
	Vn-to the place, ther she shal arryue.	Her to the shore whereat she shall arrive.

Men may ask,[3] why was she not slain? Who saved her at the banquet?—and I answer, who saved Daniel in the horrible cave? God sheweth wondrous miracles for our instruction. Who kept her from drowning in the sea?—Who kept Jonas in the fish's maw till he was spouted up at Nineveh? The same that kept the Hebrew people from drowning when they passed dryshod through the water.

Who bade the four spirits of the tempest hurt her neither waking nor sleeping? How did the victual last through three years and more of her drifting?—Who fed Mary of Egypt[4] in her cave? Who fed the multitude with five loaves and two fishes? no man but Christ. God sent his foison at her great need.

She dryueth forth in-to our occean[5]	She driveth on the ocean fierce and fell
Thurgh-out our wilde see, til, atte laste,	Across our own wild sea, till at the last

act of faith in the atonement of Christ. Tertullian, Cyprian and others allude to the habit as usual before entering upon any new undertaking.

[1] No doubt an allusion to the devils cast out of men and women by Christ.

[2] *To bait*, to feed, to stop to feed. We still retain the word in 'baiting' horses and the 'bait' of fishes.

[3] Here follow some of Chaucer's characteristic and curious objections, comments, critical explanations of the improbabilities of his own story as they occurred to his business-like mind. He had probably traced her course on the sea with map and finger, and realised all the details of such a situation.

[4] Mary of Egypt fled from an evil life to the desert, where she was miraculously sustained during forty-seven years.

[5] The North Sea.

Glossary.		
give a name to	Vnder an hold that nempnen I ne can,	Under a wood (the name I cannot tell)
	Fer in Northumberlond the wawe hir caste,	Far in Northumberland, the wave her cast:
stuck	And in the sond hir ship stiked so faste,	And in the sand the ship did cleave so fast
	That thennes wolde it noght of al a tyde,	That thence it could not stir in any tide.
	The wille of crist was that she shulde abyde.	The will of Christ was that she should abide.
	The constable of the castle doun is fare	The Constable of the castle down doth fare
	To seen this wrak, and al the ship he soughte,	To see this wreck, and through the ship he sought,
	And fond this wery womman ful of care;	And found this weary woman full of care;
	He fond also the tresor that she broughte.	He likewise found the treasure that she brought:
	In hir langage mercy she bisoughte	And in her language mercy she besought
release	The lyf out of hir body for to twinne,	That from her body they the life should take,
deliver	Hir to deliuere of wo that she was inne.	Rather than in her suffering her forsake.

The Constable took pity on her, and brought her to his own house, where she waited on Hermegild, his wife, with so much diligence and tenderness that she won everybody's love. But who and what she was she would tell no man.

The Constable and his wife were pagans, like all the people in that land.

No Christian men dared assemble there, for fear of the pagans who conquered all the northern part by land and sea. To Wales had fled the Christianity of the older Britons dwelling in the island. But Hermegild loved Constance as her life; and Constance dwelt there so long that, through her many orisons and many tears, Jesus of His grace brought Dame Hermegild to a knowledge of His truth.

were not, abbr. ne were	But yet nere cristen Britons so exiled	Yet were not Christian Britons so exil'd,
	That ther nere somme that in hir priuitee	But some few still remain'd who privily
in private	Honoured crist, and hethen folk bigiled;	Lov'd Christ, while they the heathen folk beguil'd.
deceived	And neigh the castel swiche ther dwelten three.	Of such, there dwelt beside the castle three:
such	That oon of hem was blynd, and myghte not see	And one of them was blind, and could not see
	But it were with thilke yën of his mynde,	Save with the sharpen'd vision of the mind
those eyes	With whiche men seen, whan that they ben blynde.	With which men ofttimes see when they are blind.

Bright was the sun one day when Constance, with the Constable and his wife, wandered down to the sea-shore, and they met this said blind man, crooked and old, with eyes fast shut. 'In the name of Christ, dame Hermegild,' cried

the old Briton, 'give me my sight again.' But this lady was affrighted, lest her husband, who knew not of her change of heart, should slay her for her love of Christ. Till Constance made her bold, and bade her work the miracle permitted her as daughter of Holy Church.

The Constable was abashed at what he saw, and asked them what it meant.

Then Constance declared her faith, in such wise, that ere it was eve the Constable himself believed on the Truth.

The Constable was not lord of the place. He defended it under Alla,[1] king of Northumberland, who was a wise man, and of great might against the Scots.

Now Satan, ever waiting to beguile us, saw Constance's perfection, and cast about how he might requite her for it. Therefore he raised up mischief in the person of a young knight who loved Constance, but whom she steadfastly withstood. In vain he wooed her; then, for despite, he sought to bring her to a shameful death. Thus he worked: he waited till the Constable was absent, and privily he crept by night to Hermegild's chamber.[2]

Glossary.		
tired out	Wery, for-waked in her orisouns,	Weary with long-protracted orison
	Slepeth Custance, and Hermengild also.	Slept Constance, and slept Hermegild also:
	This knyght, thurgh Sathanas temptaciouns,	This knight, by Satan's foul temptation
gone	Al softely is to the bed ygo,	All softly to the quiet bed doth go,
cut	And kitte the throte of Hermengild atwo,	And cut the throat of Hermegild in two,
	And leyde the blody knyf by dame Custance,	And laid the bloody knife by dame Constance:
where	And wente his wey, ther god yeue meschaunce!	And went his way—God bring him to mischance!

Soon after the Constable came home, and Alla the king with him. When they saw that Hermegild was slain, the Constable's grief was very great; and in the bed the bloody knife he found beside Constance. Alas! what could she say? for very woe her wits were gone.

Then they told Alla the story of Constance, how she was found in the ship; and the king's heart was touched with pity for so goodly a creature fallen in so great trouble.

	For as the lomb toward his deth is brought,	For as the lamb toward his death is brought,
	So stant this Innocent bifore the king;	So stood this innocent before the king:
	This false knyght that hath this tresoun wrought	The miscreant knight, who hath the treason wrought,
beareth witness	Berth hir on hond that she hath doon this thing.	Brings evidence that she hath done this thing.
mourning	But natheles, ther was gret moorning	Nathless there was no little murmuring

[1] Alla, *i.e.*, Ælla, king of Northumberland, A.D. 560–588: the same whose name Pope Gregory turned by a pun into Alleluia, according to the celebrated story.

[2] The manners of old times are traceable in this proof that Constance shared a chamber with the Constable and his wife. Also the facility of entry in the ill-built dormitories or 'bowers' within the courtyard is very clear.

Glossary		
	Among the peple, and seyn, they can not gesse That she hath doon so gret a wikkednesse.	Among the folk: who say they cannot guess That she hath done so great a wickedness!

Had they not all seen her, ever virtuous, and loving Hermegild as her own-self? To this every one in the house bore witness, save he who slew Hermegild. The shrewd king caught suspicion of this witness, and resolved to probe deeply the case.

	Allas! Custance! thou hast no champioun	Alas, Constance, thou hast no champiòn,
	Ne fyghte canstow nought,[1] so weylawey!	Nor canst thou fight thyself: so wellaway!
	But he, that starf for our redempcioun	But He who died for our redemptiòn
	And bond Sathan[2] (and yit lyth ther he lay)	And bound the Fiend (who yet lieth where he lay),
	So be thy strong champioun this day!	So be thy mighty Champiòn to-day!
make known	For, but if crist open miracle kythe,	For if no miracle be shewn in thee
speedily	Withouten gilt thou shalt be slayn as swythe.	Guiltless thou shalt be slain, and speedily.

Fervently did Constance pray for help from heaven.

	Haue ye not seyn som tyme a pale face,	Have ye not seen sometimes a pallid face
	Among a prees, of him that hath be lad	Among a crowd, of one who hath been led
got	Toward his deth, wher as him gat no	Toward his death, whereat he getteth
pardon	grace,	no grace,
	And swich a colour in his face hath had,	And such a colour hath his visage fed
	Men myghte knowe his face, that was	That men might know him who
bestead	bistad,	was so bestead,
	Amonges alle the faces in that route:	Yea, amongst all the faces in the rout?—
	So stant Custance, and looketh hir aboute.	So Constance stood, and cast her eyes about.
	O queenes,[3] lyuinge in prosperitee,	O queens that dwell in all prosperity!
	Duchesses, and ladyes euerichone,	O duchesses, and ladies every one!
pity (ruth)	Haueth som rewthe on hir aduersitee;	Be sorry for her dire adversity:
	An emperoures doughter stant allone;	For see, an Emperor's daughter stands alone:
no one	She hath no wight to whom to make hir mone.	She hath no friend to whom to make her moan.
	O blood roial! that stondest in this	O blood-royal! that perill'd art indeed,
danger	drede,	
	Fer ben thy frendes at thy grete nede!	Far all thy friends be, in thy greatest need.

[1] Judgment by battle was common. It was a way of trusting to Heaven's interposition. Scott describes such a case in *Ivanhoe*.

[2] In the apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus Christ descends into hell and (according to some versions) binds Satan with chains. See *Piers Plowman*, B. xviii. 401. [Skeat.]

[3] This verse is a curious illustration of the old conservative feeling (decried as snobbish in these days of republican tendency) of the value and dignity of rank. The appeal to the nobly-born on account of Constance's social position is touching from the old point of view, frivolous, even absurd, from the new one.

Alla the king had such compassion on her that from his eyes the tears ran down. Now he caused a Book[1] to be fetched, and said, 'If the knight will swear to Constance's guilt, we will consider who shall act as our justice.'

The book was a copy of the Gospels in British, and on this book the knight swore; and, meanwhile, a hand smote him on the neckbone so that he fell down like a stone, and both his eyes burst out. And a Voice was heard: 'Thou hast slandered the daughter of Holy Church in high presence: this hast thou done, and shall I hold my peace?'

At this marvel all (save Constance) stood aghast, and repented them that they had had suspicion of her; and through this miracle and her mediation, the king, and many others present, were made Christians.

Then was slain the wicked knight,—though Constance was sorry for his death. And Alla married the holy maid with all pomp. Thus Christ made fair Constance a queen.

But the queen-mother hated her. She (Donegild her name) brooked not that the royal lineage should be stained by so strange a woman, foreign and unknown, ascending the British throne.

Constance bore a son to Alla during his absence in war. The child was called Maurice, and the Constable, in whose house Constance dwelt, sent forth a messenger to King Alla, bearing a letter with the joyful news.

Part III.

Now this messenger, for his own private ends, did not go straight to the king. He went first with haste to the king's mother, Donegild, and saluted her humbly in his own language. 'Madam,' said he, 'ye may rejoice to-day. I bring news that my lady queen hath a child to the joy of the whole realm.'

Glossary.		
	Lo, heer the lettres seled of this thing,	'Lo, here are the seal'd letters of this thing
	That I mot bere with al the haste I may;	That I must bear with all the haste I may:
	If ye wol ought vn-to your sone the king,	If ye will aught unto your son the king,
	I am your seruant, bothe nyght and day.'	I am your servant both by night and day.'
at this time	Donegild answerde, 'as now at this tym, nay;	Donegild answer'd, 'On the instant, nay:
	But heer al nyght I wol thou take thy reste,	But rest thou here, and tarry for a night:
tell wish	Tomorwe wol I sey thee what me leste.'	To-morrow will I somewhat say or write.'
steadily	This messager drank sadly ale and wyn,	This messenger drank deep of ale and wine,
	And stolen were his lettres priuyly	And stolen were his letters privily
	Out of his box, whyl he sleep as a swyn;	Out of his box, while he like any swine

[1] 'Swearing on the book' still lingers in our courts of law.

Glossary.		
	And countrefeted was ful subtilly	Slept—and they counterfeited craftily
	Another lettre, wrought ful sinfully,	Another letter, wrought most sinfully
straight	Vn-to the king direct of this matere	As ye shall hear, purporting of this thing
	Fro his Constable, as ye shul after here.	As from the constable unto the king.

Now the false letters declared that the young queen was delivered of so horrible and fiendly a creature that no soul dared rest any longer in the castle. The mother was an elf,[1] who had come by chance, through charms or sorcery, and every one shrank from her.

The king was bitterly grieved on reading these terrible tidings; but being a wise and shrewd man, he told no man of his sorrow. He wrote back with his own hand: 'Welcome the will of God, evermore, to me that now have received His word. The Lord's will be done!' He then added his commands:

	Kepeth this child, al be it foul or fayr,	'Keep ye this child, yea be it foul or fair,
home-coming	And eek my wyf, vn-to myn hoomcominge;	And keep my wife, too, unto my returning.
he wills	Crist, whan him list, may sende me an heyr	Christ, when it pleaseth him, may grant an heir
	More agreable than this to my lykinge.'	More fair and fitting to my hope and yearning.'
privily	This lettre he seleth, priuely wepinge,	And seal'd the letter (but in secret mourning),
	Which to the messager was take sone,	Which to the messenger he gave: and so
do	And forth he goth; ther is no more to done.	The man went forth—no other could he do.
	O messager, fulfild of dronkenesse,	O messenger! all drowned in drunkenness!
ever	Strong is thy breeth, thy lymes faltren ay,	Strong is thy breath, thy limbs are faltering ay,
betrayest, secresy	And thou biwreyest alle secrenesse.	And in thy hands a trust is foolishness.
	Thy mynd is lorn, thou Ianglest as a Iay,	Thy mind is dull, thou janglest like a jay,
distorted	Thy face is turned in a newe array!	Thy face distorted in a wry array!—
prevails	Ther dronkenesse regneth in any route,	Where drunkenness in any company
doubt	Ther is no conseil hid, with-outen doute.[2]	Prevails, no secret can in safety be.

[1] There is reason to believe that the superstition that elves or fairies of evil kind could take human form existed long after Chaucer's day. Witches and all forms of magic were devoutly believed in, and many cruelties resulted: and how often may not advantage have been taken of the superstition for private ends, as in this story, when means of communication were so limited, education so imperfect, and evil passions rife?

Executions for witchcraft occurred even in the last century in England and Scotland, and women young and old have suffered many things on suspicion of having dealings with elves and fiends.

[2] Chaucer has given another description of drunkenness, *Knight's Tale*, p. 55.

GLOSSARY.

worthy	O Donegild, I ne haue noon english digne	O Donegild, I have no English fit
	Vn-to thy malice and thy tirannye!	To speak thy malice and thy tyranny:
	And therfor to the fende I thee resigne,	And therefore to the foul fiend leave I it—
describe	Let him endyten of thy traitorye!	Let him depict thy heartless treachery!
man-like (hard hearted)	Fy, mannish, fy! o nay, [parfay], I lye,	Unwomanly woman, fie!—O nay, I lie;
	Fy, feendly spirit, for I dar wel telle,	Fie, fiendly spirit!—for I know full well
	Though thou heer walke, thy spirit is in helle!	Though thou walk here, thy spirit is in hell!
	This messager comth fro the king agayn,	This messenger cometh from the king again,
	And at the kinges modres court al-	At the court of the king's mother
alighted	lyghte,	did he light;
	And she was of this messager ful	And of the messenger she was full
glad	fayn,	fain,
	And plesed him in al that euer she myghte.	And pleas'd him in as much as ever she might.
stuffed	He drank, and wel his girdel vnder- pyghte.	He drank, and pack'd again his girdle tight:
	He slepeth, and he snoreth in his	He slept, and fared after his common
usual way	gyse	wise
	Al nyght, vn-til the sonne gan aryse.	All night until the sun began to rise.
Afterwards	Eft were his lettres stolen eurichon	Then were his letters stolen, every one,
	And countrefeted lettres in this wyse;	And others counterfeited in this wise:
	'The king comandeth his Constable anon,	'The king commands his constable anon,
	Vp peyne of hanging and of hey	On pain of death and other penalties,
judgment	Iuÿse,	
	That he ne scholde suffren in no wyse	That he shall suffer Constance in no wise
realm, to abide	Custance in-with his regne for tabyde	Longer within the kingdom to abide
	Thre dayes and a quarter of a tyde;	Than three days and a quarter of a tide.
found her in	But in the same ship as he hir fond	'But in the self-same ship which brought her o'er,
	Hir and hir yonge sone, and al hir	Her and her young son, yea, and
property	gere,	all her gear,
put, shove	He sholde putte, and croude hir fro the lond,	He shall launch forth, and push her from the shore,
afterward	And charge hir that she neuer eft com there.'	And charge her no more nigh it to appear.'
spirit	O my Custance, wel may thy gost haue fere	O Constance mine, well may thy spirit fear
	And sleping in thy dreem been in penance,	And tremble in thy very dreams asleep
devised, preparation	Whan Donegild caste al this ordi- hen!	While Donegild thus snares thee to the deep!

The poor Constable, when he read this piteous letter, was filled with anguish. He marvelled that God could let such misery and injustice be. 'Oh, mighty God!' he prayed, 'is it Thy will, who art a righteous Judge, to suffer innocence to be destroyed whilst the wicked flourish? Woe is me, that I should be thy torturer, poor good Constance, or die shame's death myself!'

GLOSSARY.		
	Wepen both yonge and olde in al that place,	Both young and old were weeping in that place
	Whan that the king this cursed letter sente,	When the good king this cursed letter sent;
	And Custance, with a deedly pale face,	And Constance with a deathly pallid face
	The ferthe day toward hir ship she wente.	On the fourth day to meet the vessel went.
part	But natheles she taketh in good entente	Nathless her gentle spirit was content
beach	The wille of Crist, and, kneling on the stronde,	With Heaven's will; and kneeling on the beach,
what thou sendest	She seyde, 'lord! ay wel-com be thy sonde!	'Welcome, thy gifts, Lord!' was her humble speech.
	He that me kepte fro the false blame	'He that preserved me from unrighteous blame
amongst	Whyl I was on the londe amonges yow,	Whilst I was dwelling in the land with you,
also	He can me kepe from harme and eek fro shame	He can preserve me still from harm and shame
	In salte see, al-though I se nat how.	On the salt sea, although I see not how.
	As strong as euer he was, he is yet now.	As strong as ever He was He yet is now.
	In him triste I, and in his moder dere,	In Him, and in His Mother dear, trust I,
	That is to me myseyl and eek my stere.'	Who is my sail and rudder till I die.'
	Hir litel child lay weping in hir arm,	Her little child lay weeping on her arm,
	And kneling, pitously to him she seyde,	And as she knelt, so piteously she said,
	'Pees, litel sone, I wol do thee noon harm.'	'Peace, little son, I'll do thee never harm.'
	With that hir kerchef of hir heed she breyde,	With that she took the kerchief from her head,
over, eyes, laid	And ouer his litel yën she it leyde;	And on his little eyes the kerchief spread,
	And in hir arm she lulleth it ful faste,	And lull'd him in her arms to slumbers fast,
	And in-to heuen hir yën vp she caste.	Whilst up to Heaven her patient eyes were cast.
	'Moder,' quod she, 'and mayde bright, Marye,	'Mother,' she said, 'and Maiden bright, Marie!
egging on	Soth is that thurgh womannes[1] eggement	Through woman's evil instance verily

[1] Eve's urging.

GLOSSARY.		
	Mankynd was lorn and damned ay to dye,	Mankind was lost, and thence was doom'd to die :
(Fr. *croix*)	For which thy child was on a croys yrent;	Wherefore thy Son was tortur'd on the Tree.
eyes	Thy blisful yën seye al his torment ;	Thy blissful eyes beheld His Agony.
	Than is ther no comparisoun bitwene	There is no parallel betwixt thy pain
	Thy wo, and any wo man may sustene.	And any woe that we on earth sustain.
	Thou sey thy child yslayn biforn thyn yën,	'Thou saw'st thy Child destroyed before thine eyes ;
	And yet now lyueth my litel child, parfay !	But see, my little child doth live, parfay !
all the unhappy	Now, lady bryght, to whom alle woful cryën,	Now, Lady bright, to whom the sad heart cries,
	Thou glorie of wommanhede, thou fayre may,	Thou glory of Womanhood, thou fair white May,
maiden	Thou hauen of refut, bryghte sterre of day,	Thou haven of refuge, shining star of Day—
rue (pity)	Rewe on my child, that of thy gentillesse,	Pity my child ! thou whose great tenderness
pitvest, pitiable	Rewest on euery rewful in distresse !	Can reach to every sufferer in distress.
guilt	O litel child, allas ! what is thy gilt,	'O little child ! that never hast done or said
	That neuer wroughtest sinne as yet, pardè,	Evil as yet, what is the guilt in thee ?
	Why wil thyn harde fader han thee	Why would thy cruel father have
destroyed	spilt ?	thee dead ?—
	O mercy, dere Constable ! ' quod she ;	O, mercy, dearest Constable ! ' said she.
let	'As lat my litel child dwelle heer with thee ;	'Suffer my little babe to dwell with thee !
	And if thou darst not sauen him, for blame,	Nay—if thou dar'st not save him, for thy blame—
	So kis him ones in his fadres name ! '	Yet kiss him once now, in his father's name ! '
looketh	Ther-with she loketh bakward to the londe,	With that she glanceth backward to the land,
ruthless	And seyde, 'far-wel, housbond rewthelees ! '	And sigh'd 'Farewell, O husband, pitiless ! '
arose	And vp she rist, and walketh doun the stronde	And she uprose and walketh down the strand
	Toward the ship ; hir folweth al the prees,	Toward the ship : the crowd about her press,
	And euer she preyeth hir child to	And ever she prayeth her child to
husheth	holde his pees ;	hold his peace.
	And taketh hir leue, and with an holy entente	Thus took her leave, and with all holy intent
	She blisseth hir ; [1] and in-to ship she wente.	Crossing herself, upon the ship she went.

[1] See note [3], p. 147.

The ship was well victualled for a good space of time, and all other necessaries, thank Heaven, they gave her. God send her fair wind and weather, and bring her home! So she drave on her way.

Alla the king returned soon after this, and asked for his wife and child. At that, the Constable's very heart grew cold, and, bringing forth the seal and letter which he had received, he told the king plainly what had happened. 'Lord, as ye commanded me, so have I certainly done,' he said.

Then followed shrewd and subtle inquiry. The messenger was forced by torture to recall and to confess in what places he had lain night by night. The handwriting of the false letters was recognised, and the accursed deed traced home. The result of it was, as all men know,[1] that Donegild died by Alla's hand. But the sorrow of Alla for his wife and child no tongue can tell.

Constance drifted during five years and more about the sea, in great pain and peril. At last she was thrown upon an heathen shore. Then came a rude heathen thief who climbed into the ship, and fell upon Constance to harm her; but by God's grace this weak woman had strength to overcome him, and he fell overboard and was drowned.. So Christ avenged her.

Then again she drifted away, north and south, west and east, and through the narrow strait between Gibraltar and Ceuta, till it was Heaven's will to end her trouble. And meanwhile, let us speak of the Roman emperor, her father, who came to the knowledge after a time, by letters out of Syria, of the slaughter of the Christians, and the dishonour done to his daughter by the wicked Sultaness.

The emperor sent his senator with a troop of lords to take heavy vengeance on the Syrians. They burned, slew, and spoiled them during many a day before they turned back to Rome.

As they were on their homeward voyage, they met the ship wherein sat Constance, piteously driving before the wind. The senator knew her not, nor why she was in so sad a plight: nor would she say aught of her condition, though she should die for it.[2] However, he brought her to Rome, and gave her, with her young son, to his wife.

Now the senator's wife was the aunt of Constance, but she too knew her not. And Constance dwelt long with him, spending her time in holy works.

It came to pass that King Alla, who had slain his mother in just anger, repented of the deed: and he made a pilgrimage to Rome to receive his penance at the Pope's hand. The rumour soon spread in Rome town that King Alla was on his way, by harbingers[3] who went before him. Hence the senator, as the usage was, went forth to meet him—quite as much, of course, to display his own magnificence, as to pay reverence to any king.

Great honour was shewn to King Alla by the senator, great honour by Alla to him; everybody did honour to everybody else; and in a day or two the

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[1] The story runs that King Alla rushed into his mother's chamber, roused her from sleep by crying 'Traitress,' and after forcing a confession from her, cut her to pieces in her bed with his sword.

[2] The motive for this, in her country and within reach of her father, is by no means clear: unless the change in her appearance made her fear incredulity of her story.

[3] *Herberjourz*, harbourers, or harbingers, probably couriers, who preceded persons of importance to secure and prepare lodging for them. We see the origin in the meaning we still attach to 'harbinger' as one announcing an arrival.

senator was received by Alla at a great banquet, and with him went (if I shall not lie) Constance's son.[1]

Some say that it was at Constance's request that the senator took the child to the banquet. I cannot tell all the circumstances. Be that as it may, there at any rate he was; and this is a fact, that obedient to a command of his mother, the child came as they sat at meat before Alla, and stood looking in the king's face.

GLOSSARY.		
	This Alla king hath of this child greet wonder,	This Alla king hath of the child great wonder,
soon	And to the senatour he seyde anon,	And to the senator he spoke anon:
	'Whos is that fayre child that stondeth yonder?'	'Whose is the beauteous child that standeth yonder?'
know not	'I noot,' quod he, '[parfay], and by seint John!	'God knows,' quoth he, 'not I, for by St. John
	A moder he hath, but fader hath he non	A mother he hath, but father hath he none
	That I of wot'—but shortly, in a stounde,	That I can learn:' and so the time beguil'd
	He told Alla how that this child was founde.	By telling Alla how they found the child.

He spoke too of Constance's unchanging goodness and purity, so that such another woman was never known.

	Now was this child as lyk vn-to Custance	Now was this child as like unto Constance
	As possible is a creature to be.	As it is possible for child to be.
	This Alla hath the face in remembrance	King Alla hath the face in remembrance
	Of dame Custance, and ther-on mused he	Of dame Constance—and thereon marvell'd he
	If that the childes moder were aught she	If that the fair boy's mother might be she
secretly sighed	That was his wyf, and priuely he syghte,	That was his wife: and sigh'd, and sad at heart
hastened	And spedde him fro the table that he myghte.	Broke up the feast, and let the guests depart.
a phantom	'Parfay,' thoughte he, 'fantome is in my heed!	Then 'Nay,' he thought, 'a dream is in my head:
judge	I oughte deme, of skilful Iugement,	For common sense should make me confident
	That in the salte see my wyf is deed.'	That in the great salt sea my wife is dead:
	And afterward he made his argument—	And then came back again the argument—
	'What wot I, if that Crist haue hider ysent	'What know I, whether Christ hath hither sent
	My wyf by see, as wel as he hir sente	My wife by sea, as well as He her sent
thence	To my contree fro thennes that she wente?'	By sea unto my country whence she went?'

[1] Probably as page.

In the afternoon, Alla returned with the senator to see the mother of the boy, for he was possessed by his hope. And you may be sure Constance was not very merry when she learned why she was summoned by them. She shook so that she could scarcely stand upon her feet.

When Alla saw his wife, he greeted her joyfully and with tears, for at a glance he knew that it was Constance; and she for sorrow stood dumb as a tree, so was her heart shut[1] in her distress as she remembered his unkindness, for she knew nothing of the deceit practised upon them both.

GLOSSARY.		
swooned	Twyes she swowned in his owen syghte;	Twice she sank down for sorrow in his sight,
wept	He weep, and him excuseth pitously:—	And the king wept and piteously did cry,
saints	'Now God,' quod he, 'and alle his halwes bryghte	'Now God [quoth he] and all His saints so bright
wisely	So wisly on my soule as haue mercy,	Have mercy on my soul as certainly
	That of your harm as giltelees am I	As I am guiltless of your injury.
	As is Maurice my sone so lyk your face;	Even as Maurice my son is like your face!
fetch	Elles the feend me fecche out of this place!'	Else may the foul Fiend snatch me from the place.'
	Long was the sobbing and the bitter peyne	Long was the sobbing and the bitter pain
	Er that her woful hertes myghte	Ere these two woeful hearts could
cease	cesse;	rest in peace.
	Greet was the pite for to here hem pleyne	'Twas pitiful to hear them both complain:—
through	Thurgh whiche pleyntes gan her wo encresse.	Complaints which help'd their sorrow to increase.
	I prey yow al my labour to relesse;	And of the telling give me some release!
	I may nat telle her wo vn-til tomorwe,	I cannot wail from now until tomorrow.—
weary	I am so wery for to speke of sorwe.	I am so tired of telling of such sorrow.

But finally, when she saw that Alla had never injured her, the joy between them was such that (save the joy that lasteth to eternity), no one hath seen or shall see the like.

Then Constance resolved to make herself known to her royal father, and she desired Alla to prepare a feast at which the emperor should deign to be present, and should discover her. Some say that the message to the emperor was carried by the child Maurice; but, as I conjecture, Alla was not so foolish as to address him, who is the flower of Christ's people, through a child; it is better to suppose that he went himself.

The emperor granted Alla's request; and when the morning came, Alla, with his wife and son, rode forth to meet him.

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[1] A beautiful phrase, expressing the stony pain and inability to speak or weep in violent grief, especially when caused by the unkindness of one beloved.

GLOSSARY.

And whan she sey hir fader in the strete,
She lyghte doun, and falleth him to fete.
'Fader,' quod she, 'your yonge child Custance
Is now ful clene out of your remembrance.

I am your doughter Custance,' quod she,
'That whylom ye han sent vn-to Surrye.
It am I, fader, that in the salte see
Was put allone and dampned for to dye.
Now, gode fader, mercy I yow crye,
Send me namore vn-to noon hethenesse,
But thonketh my lord heer of his kyndenesse.' [1]

And when she saw her father in the street
She lighted down, and falleth at his feet.
'Father,' she cried, 'now your young child Constànce
Has past clean out of your remembrance!

'*I* am your daughter Constance,' then cried she,
'That once you sent to Syria—and I
Am she, my father, who in the salt sea
Was launch'd out all alone and doom'd to die.
Good father, now for mercy I do cry.
Send me no more to heathen lands (said she),
But thank my lord, who has been kind to me.'

Then there was great rejoicing between them.

And when Alla saw fit he left Rome with his wife, and took her back to England, where they lived in all happiness and quiet during the short time left them to live. Joy and pleasure of this world we are not meant to have long.

After Alla's death, the holy Constance returned to end her days at Rome, where, later, Maurice was made emperor by the pope, and did great honour to the Church of Christ. And now may He, who can so send joy after woe, govern us in His grace and keep us all.—*Amen.*

HERE ENDS THE 'MAN OF LAW'S TALE.'

NOTES BY THE WAY.

[Carefully, and even tenderly as Chaucer has touched off the figure of the meek and holy Christian Princess, it remains somewhat thin and filmy in its spiritual beauty, like a fair visitant from another sphere indeed—save in moments, as where he pictures her hushing the fretful babe, and appealing wildly to the helpless Constable. It shows little of the Chauceresque grasp of individual character, so clear in many other tales. Indeed, the old Sultaness appears the most living figure, though her appearance on the scene is but brief: which may argue, perhaps, that to Chaucer, as to all of us, an imperfect character is often more interesting than a perfect one, on account of the infinite possibilities of good and harm belonging to the one and not to the other. Does not white light weary, while changing colour, its decomposed and imperfect expression, comforts and refreshes?

That Chaucer was a religious man cannot be doubted—that he was a strict

[1] The Roman woman was successively under the legal governance of her father, her husband, and her son, according as death deprived her of these natural guardians; hence Constance, though a matron, appeals to her father, as still under his rule.

or narrow one, may fairly be. His theological views in this tale reflect the ignorant general prejudice against foreign forms of thought, in which, of course, he had been brought up: not his own personal hatred, which only comes out against meanness and hyprocrisy. It was, in fact, the educated, not the instinctive enmity.

To be a Mohammedan, *i.e.*, infidel, was to be all that was wicked and grisly in the eyes of the bitter Christians of Chaucer's days. The invective hurled at the Sultaness, 'well of vices,' is on account of her enthusiasm for her own creed and her intolerance of every other form of faith—in which her similarity to the Christians did not save her from the obloquy of a bigotry as violent and wicked as her own. It was not then understood how impossible it is for a Mohammedan to turn Christian—as much so as for a Christian to become a Jew—for the Mohammedans believed Mohammedanism to have *superseded* Christianity as firmly as we believe Christianity to have superseded Judaism. An advanced creed cannot give way to an obsolete one, which it has outgrown. Had Chaucer understood this he would not have put the term 'new law' in the Sultaness's mouth —which might have had some meaning if used by a Jewess.

It is quite certain that all false religions were confounded in the popular mind; that Mohammedanism and Judaism were hopelessly so is clear from Froissart's curious description of the English colloquy with the Saracens, who, on mildly inquiring why we were warring upon them, were greatly amazed at being accused *of slaying Christ*: though their attempted enlightenment of British stupidity by pointing out that the *Jews* did that, not Saracens, did not prevent the unjustifiable siege from proceeding.

In this fine tale the pathos lies in Constance's unresentful endurance of conscientious persecutions as well as malicious injuries.

Chaucer has been accused of borrowing this tale from his friend, the poet Gower, who introduced it in his *Confessio Amantis*, 1392–93. But it is far more probable that it is founded on a much older original which was common property in the fourteenth century, like hundreds of other romances and legends. Tyrwhitt conjectures that the friendship between Chaucer and Gower, intact when Chaucer sent his *Troilus* for correction (!) to 'the moral Gower,' and the 'philosophical Strode,' was interrupted in later years: a conjecture based on a passage in the Prologue to the *Man of Law's Tale*, beginning 'But certainly no words writeth he,' then quoting some of Gower's stories in no flattering terms: and, on the fact that in the copies of the *Confessio Amantis* made subsequently to Henry IV.'s accession, Gower omitted certain verses in praise of Chaucer. In this case we may further conjecture that the breach may have originated in a similar way to that between Blake and Stothard, upon Stothard's 'stealing' Blake's 'subject'—which, by the way, was the 'Procession of the Canterbury Pilgrims.'

Or did Gower 'correct, ther nede is,' with disagreeable candour ?]

Both poets may have translated Nicholas Trivet's French *Chronicle*, written after 1334.

THE PARDONER'S TALE.

MINE *Host* was well satisfied with the Nun's Priest; and thanked him laughing.

GLOSSARY.

'But, sire, faire falle you for your tale.'	'But, my good sir, fair fall you for your tale.'
And after that he with ful merry chere,	And presently he, with a merry cheer,
Sayd to another, as ye schulen here.	Address'd another man, as you shall hear.

Then mine host turned to the Pardoner: 'Thou, pardoner, thou, my good friend,' he said—

'Tel us a tale, for thou canst many oon.'	'Tell us a tale; thou knowest many an one.'
'It schal be doon (quod he), and that anoon.	'I will!' he said; 'it shall at once be done.
But first (quod he), her at this ale-stake[1]	But first,' he added, 'here at this ale-stake
I wil bothe drynke and byten on a cake.'	I'll take a drink, and have a bite of cake.'

When he had done so (for they were passing a roadside inn) he began, as you shall hear:—

There was in Flanders a company of young folk, who gave themselves up to folly and wrong-doing. They did nothing but gamble and riot, and drink wine, and dance, and swear; and their gluttony and idleness made them wicked, so that when they heard of other people committing sin, they laughed and did as much wrong as ever they could.

This kind of life degrades every one. Gluttony was the first cause of our confusion: Adam and Eve were driven from Paradise for that vice. And drunkenness leads to many other sins, as is shown in Holy Writ.

Three of these bad young men were sitting in a tavern one morning very early, drinking, when they heard the clinking of a bell[2] before a corpse that

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[1] The ale-stake was a stake set up as a sign before the inn, generally adorned with a bush. This custom prevails in Normandy still, where you may see a goodly bunch of mistletoe hanging out wherever wine or cider is sold. The reason why mistletoe rather than any other evergreen is used, is probably because it grows on apple-trees, and is therefore typical of cider, a common drink wherever apples abound.

[2] 'A small bell used formerly to be rung before the corpse as it was carried to the

was being carried to the grave. One of them called to his boy, 'Go out, and ask who that dead man is who passes by; and mind you bring his name back right!'

'Master,' said the boy, 'there is no need to go and ask, for I heard who the dead man was two hours before you came into this tavern. He was one of your own companions, and he was slain last night as he sat in his chair drinking, by a privy thief named Death, who kills everybody in this country. With his spear he smote his heart in two, and went away without speaking. About a thousand has he killed this pestilence.[1] And, master, it seems to me that before he comes to you too, it were as well to be prepared. Beware of him, be ready for him! my dame ever taught me that.'

GLOSSARY.		
innkeeper	'By seinte Mary,' sayde this taverner,	'By holy Mary,' said the innkeeper,
true	'The child saith soth, for he hath slayn this yeer,	'The child says true, for he hath slain this year,
	Hens over a myle, withinne a gret village,	Within a mile hence, in a large village,
labourer	Bothe man and womman, child, and hyne, and page.'	Both man and woman, servant, child, and page.'

'I should think he lived there, this Death, so many have died. It were wise to be warned before he came suddenly on a man!'

'Good lack,' cried one of the rioters with an oath, 'is it then such danger to meet him? I'll seek him out by street and stile.

hearken, be	'Herkneth, felaws, we thre ben all oones,	'Now listen, mates, for all we three are one,
hand	Let ech of us hold up his hond[2] to other,	Let each hold up his hand unto the other,
	And ech of us bycome otheres brother;	And each of us become the others' brother.
	And we wil slee this false traitour Deth;	And we will slay this sneaking traitor Death;
slain, slayeth	He shall be slayne, that so many sleeth.'	He shall be slain, he that so many slay'th.'

So these three men, half drunk as they were, plighted faith to live and die for each other, as though they were brothers born. And up they started, and went forth to this village, of which the innkeeper had spoken, where they thought Death lived. And much bad language they used, and many wicked things they said, resolving to catch Death before night fell.

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grave, to give notice to those who were charitably disposed that they might pray for the soul of the deceased. Our "passing bell" has the same origin, though the reason for it has ceased.'—Bell.

[1] An allusion to one of the great pestilences which devastated Europe during the 14th century. The great plague of 1369, called the 'Third,' probably carried off Queen Philippa and Blanche of Lancaster (see Table of Events), and this may approximately date the tale afterwards fitted into the *Canterbury Tales*. *This pestilence* means *during* this pestilence, as *this year* means *during* this year.

[2] 'This is still the ceremony used in taking an oath in courts of justice in Prussia.'—Bell. Notice the emphasis laid on their close friendship, and their constant allusion to their being all 'one,' over and above the solemnity of the profane vow they make.

Glossary,		
turned	Right as thay wolde han torned over a style,	Just as they were about to cross a stile,
	Whan thai han goon nought fully half a myle,	When they had gone not fully half a mile,
	An old man and a pore with hem mette.	A poor and aged man did meet them there.
meekly, greeted	This olde man ful mekely hem grette,[1]	This old man greeted them with civil air,
God see you	And saide thus, 'Lordynges, God yow se!'	And said, 'Good day, my lords, God look on ye.'
rioters	The proudest of these ryotoures thre	Then the most arrogant of the noisy three
churl	Answerd ayein, 'What, carle, with sory grace,	Answered him thus—'What, churl, with sorry grace,
wrapped up	Why artow al for-wrapped save thi face?[2]—	Why art thou all wrapped up except thy face?
	Why lyvest thou longe in so great an age?'	Why livest thou so long, and art so grey?'
began, look	This olde man gan loke on his visage,	The old man looked him in the face straightway,
because	And saide thus: 'For that I can not fynde	And answer'd thus: 'Because I cannot find
	A man—though that I walke into Inde—	A man—e'en though I walk'd as far as Inde—
none	Neither in cité noon, ne in village,	Neither in any city, nor village,
	That wol chaunge his youthe for myn age;	Willing to change his youth for mine old age;
	And therfore moot I have myn age stille	And therefore must I have my old age still
	As longe tyme as it is Goddes wille,	As long a time as it is heaven's will.
	Ne Deth, allas! ne wil not have my lif,	Nor will e'en Death receive my life, alas!
	Thus walk I lik a resteles caytif,[5]	Thus like a restless wayfarer I pass,
	And on the ground, which is my modres gate,	And on the ground, which is my mother's gate,
	I knokke with my staf, erly and late,	Keep knocking with my staff early and late,
dear	And saye, Leeve moder, let me in.	And say to her—Dear mother, let me in.
	Lo, how I wane, fleisch, and blood, and skyn—	Lo, how I vanish, flesh and blood and skin—
shall, bones	Allas, whan schuln my boones ben at rest?	Alas, when shall my bones remain at rest?

[1] The kindly custom of greeting passers-by, now rapidly going out even in our country districts, was more common in days when passers-by were infinitely rarer. Probably half a mile from the inn the road was lonesome enough, wherefore the old man's anticipation of rough treatment from three reckless and half-tipsy ruffians was not unreasonable. His calm and fearless answer was the wisest as well as the most dignified course to pursue with such assailants, being calculated to sober them as well as to save himself.

[2] Making a jest of the close coverings and wraps of old age.

[5] *Caitif*, wretch, wretched. Italian—*cattivo*, captive. Fr.—*chétif*, poor, wretched, paltry, pitiful, &c. *Captive* seems to give the most pathetic meaning, as though death were a looked-for freedom by a restless prisoner in the body. Fugitive is the next best for the sense, as the old man may be supposed to be flying to the gate for safety and comfort.

Glossary.		
	Moder, with you wil I chaunge my chest,	Mother, I want to change with you my chest,
	That in my chamber longe tyme hath be,	Which in my room so long a time hath been,
enwrap	Ye, for an haire clout[1] to wrap-in me.	Yea, for a cloth of hair to wrap me in!
	But, yet to me sche wol not do that	But yet to me she will not do that
favour	grace,	grace,
withered	For which ful pale and welkid is my face.	Wherefore so pale and wrinkled is my face
	'But sires, to yow it is no curtesye	'But, sirs, in you it is no courtesy
	To speke unto an old man vilonye,	To speak to an old man disdainfully,
unless, else	But he trespas in word or elles in dede.	Unless he shall offend in word or deed.
	In holy writ ye may yourself wel	In Holy Writ ye may your own selves
read	rede,	read,
in presence of	Ayens an old man, hoor upon his hede,	Before an aged man whose hair is grey
exhort	Ye schold arise: wherefor I you rede	Ye should rise up—and therefore I you pray
do not	Ne doth unto an old man more harm now,	Offer to an old man no mischief now
	Namore than ye wolde men dede to yow	More than you would that men did unto you
live so long	In age, if that ye may so long abyde	In your old age, if you so long abide,
walk	And God be with you, wherso ye go or ryde;	And God be with you, whither you walk or ride!
thither	I moot go thider as I have to goo.'	I must go on, whither I have to go.'
	'Nay, olde cherl, by God thou shalt not so,'	'Nay, thou old churl, thou shalt not quit us so,'
	Sayde that other hasardour anoon,	Cried out the other rioter anon,
departest, easily	'Thou partist nought so lightly, by seint Johan!	'Thou partest not so lightly, by St. John!
	Thou spak right now of thilke traitour Deth,	Thou hast just spoken of that traitor Death
	That in this contré alle our frendes sleth;	Who all our friends through all the country slây'th,
here	Have her my trouth, as thou art his aspye;	So now I warrant thee thou art his spy:
	Tell wher he is, or elles thou schalt dye,[2]	Tell where he is, this Death, or thou shalt die—
	By god and by the holy sacrament!	We swear, no less shall be thy punishment!
	For soothly thou art con of his assent,[3]	For truly thou art one of his assent
	To sleen us yonge folk, thou false theef!'	To slay all us young folk—thou false old thief!'

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[1] Hair-shroud, sackcloth, the roughest cloth.

[2] Tyrwhitt's edition has the less bloody threat, 'Tell wher he is, or thou shalt it abie!'

[3] In league with him, consenting to his action.

GLOSSARY.		
	'Now, sires, than if that yow be so leef	'Now, sirs,' quoth he, 'if you so eager be
	To frynde Deth, torn up this croked way,	To seek for Death, turn up this crooked way.
	For in that grove I laft him,[1] by my fay,	For in that grove I left him, by my fay,
remain	Under a tree, and ther he will abyde.	Under a tree, and there he will abide.
beast	Ne for your bost he nyl him no thing hyde.	Nor for your noise and boasting will he hide.
	Se ye that ook? right ther ye schuln him fynde.	See ye that oak? close there his place you'll find.
again	God save yow, that bought agein mankynde,	God save you, sirs, that hath redeem'd mankind,
	And yow amend.' Thus sayth this olde man.	And mend you all'—thus said the aged man.
every one	And everich of these riotoures ran,	And thereupon each of the rioters ran
	Til thay come to the tre, end ther thay founde	Until they reach'd the tree, and there they found
coined	Of florins[2] fyn of gold ycoyned rounde,	A heap of golden florins, bright and round,
	Wel neygh a seven busshels, as hem thoughte.	Well-nigh seven bushels of them, as they thought.
	No lenger thanne after Deth thay soughte,	And then no longer after Death they sought,
	But ech of hem so glad was of that sighte,	But each of them so glad was at the sight,
	For that the florens so faire were and brighte,	The florins were so beauteous and so bright,
	That doun thai sette hem by the precious hord.	That down they sat beside the precious hoard.
	The werste[3] of hem he spake the firste word.	The worst one was the first to speak a word.
	'Bretheren,' quod he, 'take kepe what I schal saye,	'Brothers,' said he, 'take heed of what I say,
wisdom, jest	My witte is gret, though that I bourde and playe;	For I am wise, although I jest and play;
given	This tresour hath fortune to us yiven,	This treasure makes our fortune, so that we
jollity, live	In mirth and jolyte our lyf to lyven,	May lead our lives in mirth and jollity,
cometh	And lightly as it comth, so wil we spende.	And lightly as it comes, we'll lightly spend.
weened (supposed)	Ey, Goddis precious dignite, who wende	By heaven! who would have thought that luck would send
	Today, that we schuld have so fair a grace?	Us three good friends to-day so fair a grace?
	But mighte this gold be carried fro this place	But could this gold be carried from this place
	Hom to myn hous, or ellis unto youres,	Home to my house, or else to one of yours

[1] The old man probably saw that the young men were scarcely responsible for their actions, and determined to wreak violence on some one, and therefore he played on their mood to avert their violence from himself to some other object.

[2] Florins were so named from having been first coined at Florence.

[3] Tyrwhitt.

GLOSSARY.		
know	(For wel I wot that this gold is nought oures),	(For all this gold I well know is not ours),
high	Than were we in heyh felicité.	Then were we in complete felicity.
	But trewely by day it may not be,	But, truly, during day it cannot be,
	Men wolde saye that we were theves stronge,	People would call us thieves, and possibly
have us hanged	And for our tresour doon us for to honge.	Hang us for our own treasure on a tree.
	This tresour moste caried be by nighte	This treasure should be carried off by night,
wisely	As wysly and as slely as it mighte.	As cleverly and slily as it might.
advise	Wherfore I rede, that cut among us alle	I counsel then, that we among us all
	We drawe, and let se wher the cut wil falle,	Draw lots, and see to whom the lot will fall,
blithe heart	And he that hath the cut, with herte blithe,	And he that hath the lot shall cheerfully
run, quickly	Shal renne to the toun, and that ful swithe,	Go back into the town, and speedily,
	And bring us bred and wyn ful prively,	And bring us bread and wine full privily;
subtly	And tuo of us shal kepe subtilly	Meanwhile we two keep safe and secretly
	This tresour wel: and if he wol not	This treasure here: and if he do not
delay	tarie,	tarry,
	Whan it is night, we wol this tresour carie,[1]	When the night comes we will the treasure carry,
whither	By oon assent, ther as us liketh best.'	By one assent, where we think best or list.'
	That oon of hem the cut brought in	This man then held the lots within his
fist	his fest,	fist,
look	And bad hem drawe and loke wher it wil falle,	And bade them draw and see where it would fall:
	And it fell on the yongest of hem alle,	It fell upon the youngest of them all,
	And forth toward the toun he went	Who therefore toward the town went
at once	anoon,	forth anon.
	And al so soone as that he was agoon,	As soon as their companion was gone,
	That oon of hem spak thus unto that other:	The first one subtly spoke unto the other:
	'Thou wost wel that thou art my sworne brother,	'Thou knowest well that thou art my sworn brother,
directly	Thy profyt wol I telle the anoon.	I'll tell thee what thy profit is to-day
knowest	Thou wost wel that our felaw is agoon,	Thou seest that our fellow is away,
	And her is gold, and that ful gret	And here is gold, all heap'd up
plenty	plente,	plenteously,
	That schal departed be among us thre.	Which is to be divided 'mong us three.
	But natheles if I can schape it so	But, nevertheless, if I can shape it so
	That it departed were betwix us tuo,	That it might be divided 'twixt us *two*,
	Hadde I not doon a frendes torn to the?'	Have I not done a friend's turn unto thee?'

[1] Probably in the vessels, &c., which had contained the food, thus avoiding the appearance of transporting treasure.

GLOSSARY.		
know not	That other answerd, 'I not how that may be;	'I know not,' said the other, 'how that may be;
	He wot wel that the gold is with us	He knows quite well the gold is with
two	twaye,	us two.
	What schulde we than do? what	What should we say to him? what
say	schulde we saye?'	should we do?'
	'Schal it be counsail?[1]' sayd the ferste	'Shall it be counsel?' said the first
wicked person	schrewe,	again—
	'And I schal telle thee in wordes fewe	'And in a few words I shall tell thee plain,
do	What we schul doon, and bringe it wel aboute.'	What we shall do to bring the thing about.'
	'I graunte,' quod that other, 'without doute,	'I promise,' said the other, 'without doubt
	That by my trouthe I wil thee nought	That I, for one, will not be treacherous.'
betray	bywraye.'	
knowest	'Now,' (quoth the first,) 'thou wost wel we ben twaye,	'Now,' said the first one, 'there are two of us,
	And two of us schal strenger be than	And two of us will stronger be than
	oon.	one.
look	Loke, whanne he is sett, thou right anoon[2]	Look, thou, when he is sitting down, and soon
wouldest	Arys, as though thou woldest with	Rise up, as if to play with him, and I
	him pleye,[3]	
rip	And I schal ryf him through the sydes tweye,	Will stab him through the two sides suddenly,
	Whils that thou strogelest with him	While thou art struggling with him
	as in game,	as in game,
	And with thi dagger, loke thou do the	And with thy dagger, look, thou do
	same.	the same.
divided	And than schal al the gold departed	And then shall all this gold divided
	be,	be,
thee	My dere frend, bitwixe the and me:	My dearest friend, betwixt thyself and me:
might	Than may we oure lustes al fulfille,	Then all our wants and whims we can fulfil,
dice	And pley at dees right at our owne	And play at dice according to our
	wille.'	will.'
	And thus acorded been these shrewes	And thus accorded are the ruffians
two	tweye	twain
	To sleen the thridde, as ye han herd	To slay the third as I have told you
say	me seye.	plain.
who	This yongest, which that wente to the	The youngest, who had gone into the
	toun,	town,
close	Full fast in hert he rollith up and	Deep in his mind he turneth up and
	doun	down
	The beaute of these florins, newe and	The beauty of these florins, new and
	brighte.	bright.

[1] Shall counsel be kept between us? literally, in schoolboys' language, 'Mum's the word—eh?'

[2] Bell's edition.

[3] Games which we now leave to children were formerly as popular with grown-up people. Hunt-the-slipper and blind-man's-buff were 200 years ago the common recreation of ladies and gentlemen, and wrestling and other romping was indulged in far more commonly than now by young men. Playing at ball was a favourite pastime.

Glossary.		
	'O Lord,' quoth he, 'if so were that I mighte	'O Lord,' quoth he, 'if any-wise I might
	Have all this gold unto myself alloone,	Have all this treasure to myself alone,
throne	Ther is no man that lyveth under the troone	There is no man that dwelleth under the throne
	Of God, that schulde lyve so mery as I.'	Of God, who then should live so merry as I.'
	And atte last the feend, oure enemy,	And at the last the fiend, our enemy,
	Put in his thought that he schulde	Put in his thought that he should
buy	poysoun beye,	poison buy,
slay	With which he mighte sle his felawes tweye.	With which to cause his comrades both to die.
	For why? the feend fond him in such lyvynge	For why? the fiend found this man's life so foul
sorrow	That he hadde leve to sorwe him to brynge:	That he had power now upon his soul:
	For this was outrely [1] his ful entente	For this was utterly his fix'd intent
slay	To slen hem bothe, and never to repente.	To slay them both and never to repent.
	And forth he goth, no lenger wold he	And forth he goes, no longer would he
delay	tarye,	tarry,
apothecary	Into the toun unto a potecarye.	Into the town to an apothecary,
	And prayde him that he him wolde selle	And begged him plausibly that he would sell
rats	Som poysoun, that he might his rattis quelle;	Him poison strong enough the rats to quell;
farmyard	And eek ther was a polkat in his hawe	Also, there was a polecat in his yard
	That, as he sayde, his capouns had i-slawe,	Which had destroy'd his capons, he averr'd,
avenge	And said he wold him wreke, if that he mighte,	And he would gladly rid him if he might
	Of vermyn, that destroyed hem by nighte.	Of vermin, which destroy'd them in the night.
the apothecary	Thapotecary answerd,[2] 'Thou schalt have	The apothecary answered, 'Thou shalt have
	A thing that, also God my soule save,	Something so strong, as God my soul shall save,
	In al this world ther nys no creature	That in this world nothing that living is
	That ete or dronk hath of this confecture—	Who in his food doth eat or drink of this—
mixture		
amount	Nought but the mountaunce of a corn of whete—	Nay, but the greatness of a grain of wheat—
quit	That he ne schuld his lif anoon forlete;	Shall fail to die, his life shall be forfeit;
die	Ye, sterve he schal, and that in lasse while	Yea, he shall die, and that in lesser while
step	Than thou wilt goon a paas not but a myle,	Than thou shalt walk a step beyond a mile,
	This poysoun is so strong and violent.'	This poison is so strong and violent.'

[1] Tyrwhitt. *Outrely*, utterly, beyond all things. *Vide* the French—*outre mesure*, beyond measure. The common mediæval expressions, '*out of* measure,' '*out of* doubt,' were probably from the same word, *outre*= beyond.

[2] Tyrwhitt.

GLOSSARY.		
caught or taken	This cursed man hath in his hond i-hent	This curséd man hath taken it and pent
then	This poysoun in a box, and sins he ran	The poison in a box, and forthwith ran
	Into the nexte stret unto a man	Hastily to the next street, to a man
	And borwed of him large boteles thre,	And borrow'd of him some large bottles three,
	And in the two his poysoun poured he:	And into two the poison pouréd he:
third, clean	The thrid he kepede clene for his drynke,	The third he kept untainted for himself,
prepared, labour	For al the night he schop him for to swynke	Meaning to toil at carrying his pelf
	In carying of the gold out of that place.	From out that cursed place the whole night long.
rioter	And whan this riotour, with sorry grace,	And when this villain, bent on doing wrong
	Hath fillid with wyn his grete botels thre,	Had filled his three great bottles up with wine,
again	To his felaws ayein repaireth he.	Back to his mates he went, as if to dine.
sermonize	What nedith it therof to sermoun more?	What need is there of saying any more?
arranged	For right as they hadde cast[1] his deth bifore,	For as they had devised his death before,
have	Right so thay han him slayn, and that anoon.	E'en so they slew him, and with brief delay.
spake, one	And whan this was i-doon, thus spak that oon:	And when the deed was done, the first did say,
	'Now let us drynke and sitte, and make us mery,	'Now let us sit and drink, and make us merry,
will	And afterwards[2] we wil his body bery.'	And afterwards we will his body bury.'
by chance	And with that word[2] it happed him *par cas*	And speaking thus, he chanced, upon the minute,
wherein	To take the botel ther the poysoun was,	To take a bottle which had poison in it,
gave	And drank, and yaf his felaw drink also,	And drank, and gave his fellow drink beside,
soon, died	For which anon thay stervede bothe two.	Whereby within a little space they died.
certainly	But certes I suppose that Avycen[3]	But truly I suppose that Avicen
wrote	Wrot never in *canoun*, ne in non *fen*,	Did ne'er describe in *canon* or in *fen*
wondrous pangs	Mo wonder sorwes of empoisonyng	More frightful pains of deadly poisoning,
	Than hadde these wrecches tuo or here endyng.	Than these two wretches felt in perishing.
be	Thus endid been these homicides tuo,	Thus ended both the wicked homicides,
also	And eek the fals empoysoner also.	And that false-hearted poisoner besides.

HERE ENDS THE 'PARDONER'S TALE.'

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[1] Cast, as in '*cast* a nativity,' means fix upon, arrange, discover.

[2] Tyrwhitt.

[3] Avicen, Ebn Sina, an Arabian physician of the 10th century. *Fen*, apparently an Arabic word, is the name given to the sections of Avicenna's great work on physic, entitled *Canun*.—Tyrwhitt.

NOTES BY THE WAY.

[During the 12th, 13th, and 14th centuries the passion for gambling had spread from the highest to the very lowest class of the population. The practice of men drinking and playing themselves bare in the taverns, where both vices were encouraged by the taverners, was common enough to provoke numberless censures and caricatures, so much so that it is a mercy Sir Wilfrid Lawson was spared the spectacle. The *Pardoner's Tale* is one of the list.

The taverns were the resort of all the refuse of the people: the taverners found it suited them to act as pawnbrokers, advancing money on the clothes and property of the ne'er-do-wells who lacked cash to stake or to pay; and provided other attractions whereby men were tempted to various vices, and robbed during their drunken sleep. The language of these young rascals of both sexes is graphically condemned by the Pardoner; and gluttony is pointed out as the root of all evil, for which Adam fell.

Hazard was the game with which our rioters strove to 'drive away the day.' Mr. Wright, speaking of the use of dice, tells us, 'In its simpler form, that of the game of hazard, in which the chance of each player rested on the mere throw of the dice, it was the common game of the low frequenters of the taverns—that class which lived upon the vices of society, and which was hardly looked upon as belonging to society itself.' Men staked all they possessed, to the very clothes on their backs, on one cast.

Chaucer tells us contemptuously how the King of Parthia sent a pair of golden dice to King Demetrius in scorn, knowing he was a player, to express that he held his glory and renown at no value, being liable to disappear at any moment.

The three rioters were probably young men who had ruined themselves by folly and license, and whose besetting sin, surviving all it throve on, urged them to any and every crime for the sake of renewed gratification. Their end is beyond measure frightful. *For why?—The fiend found him in such living that he had leave to bring him to grief*, says the severe old moralist.

The extreme beauty of this poem, even in a technical sense alone, is such that I lament the necessity of abridging it.

The tale illustrates curiously enough the mediæval manner of conveying moral lessons from the pulpit: which was not ruled in Old England by the restrictions we are used to. The Pardoner expressly states that he learned the tale for the purpose of introducing it in his sermons. The outline of the tale is to be found in the *Cento Novelle Antiche*, Nov. lxxxii.]

MINOR POEMS.

GOOD COUNSEL OF CHAUCER.

GLOSSARY.

mob	FLE fro the pres, and duelle with sothfastnesse,	Fly from the crowd, and dwell with truthfulness
honesty	Suffice the thy good, though hit be smale,	Contented with thy good, though it be small;
hoards, uncertainty	For horde hath hate, and clymbyng tikelnesse,	Treasure breeds hate, and climbing dizziness,
deceived everywhere	Pres hath envye, and wele is blent over alle.	The world is envious, wealth beguiles us all.
taste	Savour no more then the behove shalle;	Care not for loftier things than to thee fall;
	Rede[1] well thy self, that other folke canst rede,	Counsel thyself, who counsel'st others' need,
without fear	And trouthe the shall delyver, hit ys no drede.	And truth thee shall deliver, without dread.
	Peyne the not eche croked to redresse,	Pain thee not all the crooked to redress,
	In trust of hire that turneth as a balle,[2]	Trusting to her who turneth as a ball,
great peace lies, meddling	Grete rest stant in lytel besynesse.	For little meddling wins much easiness.
	Bewar also to spurne ayein an	Beware lest thou do kick against
awl	nalle,[3]	an awl,
crock	Stryve not as doth a croke[4] with a walle:	Strive not as doth a clay pot with a wall:
	Deme[5] thyselfe that demest others dede,	Judge thou thyself, who judgest others' deed,
	And trouthe the shal delyver, hit ys no drede.	And truth thee shall deliver, without dread.
thee	That the ys sent receyve in buxomnesse,	All that is given take with cheerfulness,
	The wrasteling of this world asketh a falle;[6]	To wrestle in this world is to ask a fall;
here	Her is no home, her is but wyldyrnesse.	Here is no home, here is but wilderness.
beast	Forth, pilgrime!—forth, best, out of thy stalle!	Forth, pilgrim, forth!—forth, beast, out of thy stall!
	Loke up on hye, and thonke God of alle!	Look up on high, and thank thy God for all!

[1] Tyrwhitt's and Bell's editions. Morris has 'Do wel.'

[2] Fortune with her wheel. See *Notes by the Way* to the *Monk's Tale*, p. 121.

[3] 'Kick against the pricks.'

[4] For the clay pot is the weaker of the two.

[5] Tyrwhitt. Morris has *daunte* and *dauntest* (Fr. *dompter*), meaning control.

[6] A happy image, two ill-matched wrestlers.

GLOSSARY.

give up, desire

Weyve thy lust, and let thy goste the lede,	Cast by ambition, let thy soul thee lead,
And trouthe shal the delyver, hit ys no drede.	And truth thee shall deliver, without dread.

NOTES BY THE WAY.

[We have Mr. F. J. Furnivall's authority, as well as internal evidence, for believing that this pathetic little poem expresses Chaucer's feeling at the time of his expulsion from the Customs offices, the beginning of his period of misfortunes, and was written immediately after the calamity. We seem to gather scattered hints of recent 'wrestlings' before the blow came—vain attempts to elevate, and purify, and carry out reforms, to make straight crooked paths. Lost labour —*pain thee not all the crooked to redress!*—trusting to fortune (money being requisite to reform): for those who value peace of mind should let sleeping dogs lie. We seem to catch the echoes of stormy times, of personal recrimination, envy, hatred, and malice, against a 'climbing' man protected by Court favour for many prosperous years, but at length within the reach of foes when that protection waxed powerless. Chaucer may, like many another man, have made no enemies till he was prosperous enough to be dangerous; but his month of power in Parliament ruined him. It is pretty cettain that some vote of his, while sitting for Kent, caused his dismissal from office. It was a case of win all or lose all, and he lost. To fight against such odds were as idle as undignified: surely, indeed, but courting worse injuries, 'kicking against an awl.' When the weak and the strong strive together, it is the weak who suffers. The criticism upon others which had failed to do good were now best turned philosophically upon himself. That which the fountain gave forth returns again to the fountain, as a poet 500 years later has said. It is impossible, in reading these melancholy and stately lines, not to feel that they ring true, and betray the half-sarcastic disappointment of a well-meaning man, the resignation of a religious man, and the faith in right-dealing bringing its own reward of a thoroughly honest man.

It is probable that the loss to Chaucer in a pecuniary sense was very severe; and the suddenness of the blow may account for much of his after poverty.[1] The loss may have come at a time when he had debts which it would be very hard to pay out of a diminished income—debts which may have hampered his whole after-life. His appointment of a deputy to the office of Clerk of the King's Works, in 1391, and his subsequent resignation of the office, appear to me to hint at ill-health, as may his death a year after getting his lease for fifty-three years of the tenement in Westminster, where he died.

The last verse of this poem is the most remarkable of the three. Full of just contempt for his enemies' aspersions, and of hearty trust in the power of truth to set things right, he rises suddenly into a passion of aspiration. Trying to be content with adversity, he is angry with himself for feeling it so deeply. To wrestle in this world is but courting an overthrow. But this is not our Home, this is but a desert leading to a higher state. Forth, pilgrim! gird up thy loins with fresh vigour to journey on. Forth, pilgrim! *forth, beast, out of the stall* of narrow hopes and interest! look higher, and thank thy God for all. To cast by all the soul's lets and hindrances—to be led by the higher self—that is the pilgrim's longing, and that is the sublimest hope of the human heart. Wiclif's well-known words in 1381, 'Truth will conquer,' seem to be echoed in the *Good Counsel* of Chaucer, five years later.]

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[1] See p. 23.

A BALADE OF GENTILNESSE.

GLOSSARY.		
supplier or origin	THE firste fadir and fynder of gentilnesse,[1]	The Father and First Cause of nobleness . . .
of good birth	What man desirith gentil for to be,	Who truly noble hath desire to be
	Moste folwe his trace, and alle his wittes dresse	Must follow in His steps, and strive and press
vices	Vertu to shew, and vicis for to flee;	To win him Virtue and from Vice to flee.
belongeth	For unto vertu longith dignitee,	Only in Virtue lieth dignity,
safely judge	And nought the revers, savely dare I deme;	In dignity no virtue, as I deem,—
	Al were he mitre, corone or diademe.	Nay, wear he mitre, crown, or diadem!
stock	This firste stoke was ful of rightwisnesse,	Lo, the First Cause was full of righteousness.
	Trewe of his worde, soboure, pitous and free,	His word was Truth—pitiful, sober, free.
	Clene of his gooste and lovid besynesse,	And clean in spirit, loving helpfulness,
	Ageynst the vice of slowthe in honeste;	Hating the vice of sloth perpetually.
	And but his heire love vertu as did he,	And, but His heir love Virtue as did He,
though	He nis not gentille thouhe him riche seme,	He is not noble, howso rich he seem,—
	Al were he mitre, corone or diademe.	Nay, wear he mitre, crown, or diadem!
	Vyce may welle bee heyre to olde richesse,	Vice may well heir be to old Wealthiness;
	But there may no man, as ye may welle see,	Yet no man to his son, as ye may see,
bequeath	Byquethe his sone his vertuous noblesse;	Can will away his inward nobleness.
appropriated	That is approperid into noo degree,	True honour is the right of no degree,
	But to the firste Fadir in Magestee,	But of the Father, first in majesty,
	Which may His heires deme hem that Him queme	Which maketh heritor who pleaseth Him,—
	Al were he mitre, corone or diademe.	Yea, wear he mitre, crown, or diadem!

[1] By the 'first Father and finder of gentleness' (gentle birth) the poet seems to mean Christ. There is an expression somewhat similar in the *Wife of Bath's Tale*, 'Crist wol we clayme of him our gentilesse.' The meaning is that the noblest birth and the proudest heritage is not that received through man's wealth and worldly honour, but that derived from a virtuous ancestry and a righteous life, *i.e.*, our heavenly Father's gift.

TWO RONDEAUX.

GLOSSARY.

slay	YOURE two eyn will sle me sodenly,	Your fair two eyes will slay me suddenly,
sustain	I may the beauté of them not sustene,	I know not how to bear their beauty's sheen,
goeth	So wendeth it thorow-out my herte kene.	It pierceth all my heart athrough so keen.
	And but your wordes will helen hastely	And if your words heal not full speedily
fresh	My hertis wound, while that it is grene,	My heart's deep wound, while still the wound is green,
	Youre two eyn will sle me sodenly, &c.	Your fair two eyes will slay me suddenly, I know not how to bear their beauty's sheen, It pierceth all my heart athrough so keen.
tell	Upon my trouth I sey yow feithfully	Upon my faith I tell you faithfully
are	That ye ben of my liffe and deth the quene,	Both of my life and death you are the queen,
	For with my deth the trouth shal be i-sene.	For in my dying shall the truth be seen.
	Youre two eyn, &c.	Your fair two eyes will slay me suddenly, I know not how to bear their beauty's sheen, It pierceth all my heart athrough so keen.

	SYN I fro Love escaped am so fat,	Since I escaped from love, I am so fat,
taken	I nere thinke to ben in his prison lene: [1]	No more I shall his captive be so lean:
since, free	Syn I am fre, I counte him not a bene.	Since I am free, I count him not a bean!
	He may answere and seye this and that:	He may reply, and answer this and that:
I care not	I do no fors, I speak ryght as I mene:	I care not, for I speak but as I mean:
	Syn I fro Love escaped am so fat.	Since I from love escaped, I am so fat!

[1] Bell's edition reads *tene*, taken.

Glossary.		
struck slate	Love hath my name i-strike out of his sclat,	My name—out of his slate Love striketh that.
books	And he is strike out of my bokes clene	And he is struck out of my books as clean
means	For evermo, there is none other mene.	For evermore, there is no way between!
	Syn I fro Love, &c.	Since I escaped, &c.

PROVERBS OF CHAUCER.

shall	What shul these clothes thus manyfolde	What use, these clothes so manifold,
hot	Loo, this hoote somers day?	Lo, this glowing summer's day?
	After greet hete cometh colde;	—After great heat there cometh cold.
	No man caste his pilch away.	Cast no man his cloak away.
	Of al this world the large compace	The mighty compass of this earth
twain	It wil not in myn armes tweyne;	In my two arms I cannot fold.
much	Whoo-so mochel wol embrace	—Whoso will grasp too great a girth
little	Litel thereof he shal distreyne.	But little of it shall he hold.
unsteady	The worlde so wide, thaire so remuable,	The world so wide, the *air's* incessant moving,
ignorant	The sely man so litel of stature;	And lo, man's narrow mind, and little stature!
grown	The grone of grounde,[1] and clothing so mutable,	Grown of the *ground*, so mutable in clothing,—
hot	The fire so hoote and subtil of nature,	The *fire* so hot and subtle in its nature—
still	The water never in oon—what creature	The *water* never at rest—alas, what creature
transient, (Ger. *fleten*)	That made is of these foure thus flyttynge	Made of so vague and transitory *four*
	May stedfast be, as here, in his lyvynge?	Can tarry steadfast in his mortal hour?
	The more I goo the ferther I am behinde	The more I haste, the further I am behind,
nearer	The ferther behinde the ner my wayes ende;	The further behind, the nearer my way's end.
seek	The more I seche the worse can I fynde,	The hotlier I seek, the less I find—
more unwilling, go	The lighter leve, the lother for to wende:	Nearer to leaving life, more loth to wend!
better	The bet I serve, the more al out of mynde	The more I serve, the less I find a friend.
I know not, misfortune	Is thys fortune n'ot I, or infortune:	Be this good luck or ill, I know not whether:
loose, tether	Though I go lowse, tyed am I with a lune.	Though I go loose, tied am I with a tether.

[1] Sprung, as man is, from the dust.

VIRELAI.

Glossary.		
	Alone walkyng,	Alone walk I,
mourning	In thought pleynyng	With many a sigh
	And sore syghyng,	In secrecy,
	Al desolate,	All desolate,
remembering	Me remembryng	And still review
my way of living	Of my lyvyng,	My life anew:
wishing	My deth wyshyng	For death I sue
	Bothe erly and late.	Both early and late.
unfortunate	Infortunate	My fate doth grow
so	Is soo my fate	So luckless now
	That, wote ye whate?	That—do you know?
beyond measure	Oute of mesure	Beyond all telling
	My lyfe I hate,	My life I hate:
	Thus, desperate,	Thus, desperate,
poor	In suche pore estate	In woeful state
remain	Do I endure.	I still am dwelling.
	Of other cure	I am not sure
not	Am I nat sure;	Of any cure;
	Thus to endure	'Tis hard t' endure
	Ys hard, certayn!	With no relief!
use	Suche ys my ure,	But certain 'tis,
assure	I yow ensure:	My state is this:
	What creature	What thing that is
	May have more payn?	Could have more grief?
truth	My trouth so pleyn	My story plain
taken	Ys take in veyn,	Is taken in vain,
	And gret disdeyn	With great disdain
remembrance	In remembraunce;	In recollection;
gladly	Yet I ful feyn	Yet I would fain
	Wolde me compleyn,	Alway complain,
to avoid	Me to absteyn	To shun the pain
penance	From thys penaunce.	Of this correction!
substance	But, in substaunce,	For which find I,
alleviation	None allegeaunce	Substantially,
grievance	Of my grevaunce	No remedy
not	Can I nat fynd;	My lot to mend;
	Ryght so my chaunce	So fate, I see,
displeasure	With displesaunce	Still draws on me
advance	Doth me avaunce;	More enmity—
	And thus an end.	And there's an end!

COMPLAINT OF CHAUCER TO HIS PURSE.

GLOSSARY.		
no one else	To yow, my purse, and to noon other wight,	To you, my purse, and to no other wight,
	Complayn I, for ye be my lady dere;	Complain I, for you are my lady dear;
	I am so sorry now that ye been lyght,[1]	I am so sorry now that you are light,
if	For certes, but-yf ye make me heavy cheer	For truly if you make me heavy cheer
I were	Me were as leef be layde upon my bere,	I would as lief be laid upon my bier.
	For whiche unto your mercy thus I crye—	Therefore unto your mercy thus I cry—
be	Beeth hevy ageyne, or elles mote I dye!	Be heavy again, or else I needs must die!
vouchsafe before	Now voucheth sauf this day, or hyt be nyghte,	I prithee grant this day, ere it be night,
sound	That I of yow the blissful soune may here,	That I once more your merry voice may hear,
	Or se your colour lyke the sunne bryghte,	Or see your colour like the sunshine bright,
	That of yelownesse hadde never pere!	Whereof the yellowness had never peer!
rival	Ye be my lyfe! ye be myn hertys stere!	You are my life, and you my heart shall steer;
rudder	Quene of comfort and goode companye,	Queen of all comfort and good company,
	Beth hevy ayeyne, or elles moote I die!	Be heavy again, or else I needs must die!
life's	Now, purse, that ben to me my lyves lyghte,	Now, purse, who are to me my life, my light,
saviour	And saveour as doun in this worlde here,	And chief deliverer in this world here,
	Oute of this toune helpe me thurgh your myght,	Out of this city help me, by your might,
since, treasurer	Syn that ye wole nat bene my tresorere,[2]	If you no more will be my treasure dear,

[1] A play on the word: light meant also fickle or untrue.

[2] Tyrwhitt has treasure; Morris has *tresorere*, treasurer. The former seems the most appropriate to a lady-love. A similar expression is found in 'Li Congiés Adan d'Aras' (MS. de la Vallière, No. 2736 Bibl. Imp.), 'de mon cuer serés tresoriere.'

GLOSSARY.
nigh

For I am shave[1] as nye as is a frere.
But I praye unto youre courtesye,
Bethe hevy ayeyn, or elles moote I dye!

For I am shaved as close as any frere.
But I beseech you of your courtesy,
Be heavy again, or else I needs must die!

NOTES BY THE WAY.

[Chaucer's *Complaint to his Purse* was written, according to Mr. Furnivall, in September, 1399, when Chaucer was in distress for money, and sent to Henry IV. as a broad hint,—which was at once attended to.

It is a very clever piece of versification, like the *Good Counsel*, &c., each line rhyming with the corresponding line in the other verses. He addresses his hapless purse as though it were his lady-love, and comically entreats her mercy, when he sees her inclined to be 'light.'

The two Roundels and the *Virelai* have been asserted and denied to be the work of Chaucer, but there is no clear evidence for either side. They may well be a portion of his many lost 'ditties and songs glad,' with which Gower said 'the land fulfilled is over all,' written 'in the floures of his youth.' The second Roundel seems, on the other hand, to belong to his later life, when he so often alluded to his corpulence. As to the *Virelai*, this species of lyric was very fashionable in Chaucer's time. It is skilful work, each stanza rhyming six lines together (which I have failed to follow in the translation).

Only the first two verses of the Proverbs are undoubtedly genuine; the other two, though following without any distinction in the MSS., are believed to be later work. The Proverbs appear to belong to the same period as the *Good Counsel*, as they suggest the pain of disappointed ambition and 'cold' following upon 'great heat' and prosperity. Perhaps Chaucer regretted not having laid up against a rainy day.]

[1] Bereft of money as a friar's tonsure is of hair.

FRAGMENTS.

THE DAISY.

GLOSSARY.		
	Now . . .	Now . . .
	. . . of alle the floures in the mede	. . . of all the flowerets in the mead,
	Thanne love I most thise floures white and rede	Still love I most these flowerets white and red,
	Such as men callen daysyes in oure[1] toune[2]	The same that men call daisies in our town.
	To hem have I so gret affeccioun,	To them I bear so great affectiòn,
before	As I seyde erst, whanne comen is the May,	(As I have said,) when comes the month of May,
	That in my bed ther daweth me no day	That in my bed there dawns on me no day
am not	That I nam uppe,[3] and walkyng in the mede,	But I am up—and walking in the mead—
sun	To seen this floure ayein the sonne sprede,	To see this flower against the sunrise spread,
morning	Whan it up rysith erly by the morwe;	When it uprises early in the morrow;
	That blisful sighte softneth al my sorwe.	That blissful sight, it softeneth all my sorrow.

Legend of Good Women.

A VISION OF A GARDEN.[4]

	A gardyn sawh I ful of blossomed bowis,	A garden saw I, full of blossomy boughs,
mead	Upon a ryver, in a grenë mede,	Whereby a river had its greenest bed.
enough	Ther as swetnes evermor ynowh is,	Sweetness enough it hath, for in it grows
	With flourës whitë, blew, yelow and rede,	Full many a flower, white, blue, yellow, red:
	And colde wellë stremës, nothing dede,	And coldest wells are streaming, nothing dead,
swim	That swommen[1] ful of smale fisshes lyghte,	All swimming full of fishes small and light,
	With fynnës rede, and scalës sylver bryghte.	With fins of red, and scales like silver bright.

---

[1] Tyrwhitt's edition.
[2] Our town—London.
[3] Chaucer often refers to his daily early walk from London to the fields. Everybody rose at dawn then.
[4] A mediæval garden was wholly unlike

GLOSSARY.		
	On every bowgh the briddës herde I synge,	On every bough the glad birds heard I sing,
voice	With voys of aungel in her armony,	Voiced like the angels in their harmony—
themselves	That besyed hem hir briddës forthe to brynge:	Busying them, the young birds forth to bring:
began to	The lytel pretty [1] conyes to hir pley gunnen hye:	The little pretty conies to their play did hie,
began to	And further al aboute I gan espye.	And further all about I seem'd to spy,
timid	The dredful roo, the buk, the hert and hynde,	The dread-full roe, the buck, the hart and hind,
beasts	Squerels, and bestis smale, of gentil kynde	Squirrels, and all wild things of gentle kind.
	On instrumentes [2] of stryngës in acord	On instruments of strings in full accord
	Herde I so pley a ravisshynge swetnesse,	Heard I so play, a ravishing sweetnèss,
	That God, that Maker ys of al and Lorde,	That God, that Maker is of all, and Lord,
	Ne herdë never bettir, as I gesse:	Never heard any better, as I guess.
hardly	Therewith a wynde, unnethe hyt mighte [3] be lesse,	Therewith a wind—could scarcely wind be less—
	Made in the levës grene a noyse softe,	Made in the leaflets green its noises soft,
birds'	Accordant to the foulys songe on lofte.	Tun'd to the tender voice of birds aloft.

The Parliament of Birds.

---

our own over-cultivated and quite artificial gardens; it was more nearly like a shrubbery or park-land, the trees and plants growing as their nature bade, and dying in their proper seasons. There were 'beds' of guarded plants, surrounded with fences several feet high, to keep off dogs and equally destructive human beings, around which the turf grew, full of daisies and dandelions. See my illustration to the *Franklin's Tale*, in *Chaucer for Children*. The flowers of the garden were only the indigenous wild things now called 'weeds,' for the immense catalogue of importations from America and elsewhere were of course unknown. Many that have 'had their day and ceased to be' in fashion, were as yet unknown too, such as the sunflower. The red and white May, the dogrose, primrose, and the other flowers which we banish to the kitchen garden or admire only in the fields, formed the chief ornaments. We find nettles and nightshade reckoned among garden plants; so that the coloured flowers above-named may have been snow-drops, bluebells, buttercups, and May—or wild-rose, nightshade, dandelions, and meadow-sweet—according to the season. A fountain was a common ornament, built of stone rudely carved, and filled with fish; the fountain would of course be placed at the pressure of a natural spring.

[1] This line should scan thus:

The lit|tle pretty co|nies to|their play| 'gan hie,

or thus:

The lit|tle pret|ty co|nies to hir play| 'gan hie.

The superfluous syllables run through quickly, like semi-quavers in a phrase of quavers. This forms a pretty break in the monotony of even lines, though the rhythm is not lost: Chaucer presents frequent examples of this.

[2] Mediæval music was of a simple, rather mournful, description, like old Church chants, and this 'sweetness' of 'strings in accord' was in harmony with the soft wind-sounds; whilst the simile to the music in Heaven is not unseemly, since secular and Church music were similar. The instruments indicated were doubtless the rotta, a primitive guitar, shawms, and the crouth, a primitive fiddle.

[3] Tyrwhitt's edition.

THE SEA-FIGHT.—ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA.

Glossary.		
aware	Antonius, that was war, and wol nat fayle	Antony was prepar'd, and would not fail
	To meten with thise Romaynes . . .	To meet the Romans. . . .
they happened	And in the see hit happed hem to mete.	It chanc'd, at sea the meeting came about.
	Up gooth the trumpe, and for to shoute	Up goes the trumpet! now they shoot
shoot	and shete	and shout,
take pains	And paynen hem to sette on with the sonne;	And struggle to put forward with the sun!
	With grisly soune out gooth the grete gonne,	With grisly sound out goeth the great gun,
heartily, push, at once	And hertely they hurtelen al attones	And with good heart they push in all at once!
	And fro the toppe doune cometh the grete stones.	Now from the top down come the rattling stones—
grappling iron	In gooth the grapenel so ful of crokes,	In goes the grappling-iron full of crooks—
	Among the ropes, and the sherynge hokes;	Among the rigging run the shearing-hooks—
	In with the polax preseth he and he:	In with the pole-axe presseth he, and he—
	Byhynde the maste begynneth he to fle,	Behind the mast another tries to flee—
	And out agayn, and dryveth hym overborde;	And out again, and drives him overboard—
	He styngeth hym upon his speres	Now he is stuck on his spear-point—
point	orde:	well gor'd!
tears	He rente the sayle with hokes lyke a sithe;	*He* rends the sail with hooks, as with a scythe—
	He bryngeth the cuppe,[1] and biddeth hem be blithe;	*He* brings the cup and bids the men be blithe—
	He poureth pesen upon the hacches slidre;	*He* poureth peas upon the slippery hatches—
go together	With pottes ful of lyme,[2] they goon togedre.	With pots of lime men hurry by in batches—
	And thus the longe day in fight they spende,	And thus all day in bloody fight they spend,
	Til at the last, as every thing hath ende,	Till at the last, as all things have an end,
	Antony is shent, and put hym to the flyghte,	Antony's ruin'd, and put to shameful flight,
gone	And al hys folke to-goo, that best goo myghte.	And all his men are gone, that best go might.
(Fr. *pourpre*)	Fleeth ek the queene, with al hir purpre sayle,	The queen fled frighted, with her purple sail,
	For strokes which that went as thik as hayle:	Before the strokes which fell as thick as hail—
	No wonder was.	No wonder was!

Legend of Good Women.

---

[1] Drink to refresh and hearten up the men.

[2] Probably quicklime to set fire to the ship. See the woodcut of a fourteenth century ship, *Chaucer for Children*, page 8. At the top of the mast was a car in which

NOTES BY THE WAY.

[I have ventured to set these stolen fragments as single gems for the convenience of many who are prejudiced against Chaucer as a dry and wordy writer. Young scholars, hardly ready to plunge into the whole sweet depth of Chaucer's main, may enjoy these little palmfuls brought from the sea.

Nothing can be more picturesque and pretty than Chaucer's miniatures by the way. The *Daisy* is one of his reiterated praises of that simple flower. The 'Garden-vision' is brimful of bright and pleasant images, and I have found it for that reason a favourite piece with young children. The mildest modern poetaster could have written nothing simpler, the greatest singer could sing no sweetlier, for the scene of the garden with its sweet *habitats* of all fresh, free, wild things, happy in their natural order, has all the fragrance and movement of nature carried into it, and the details of scampering rabbits, and peeping eyes of timid hart and hind, and strong running streams, down to the live tints upon the fishes, are most quaint and charming. The rest of the poem is full of such miniatures. The description of the numerous birds choosing their mates on Valentine's Day shows a large knowledge of wild things' habits and the legends concerning them, from the first scene of the noisy feathered folk crowding so that Chaucer has hardly room to stand, to the last naturalistic touch when the birds tire of speechifying:—

> The noyse of fowles for to be delivered
> So lowde rang, 'Have done, and let us wend.'

The brief picture of a sea-fight is one of the few which Chaucer has left us, and is interesting for its details of the ancient manner of attack. It has been said of Chaucer that he scarcely alludes to contemporary events, and makes no mention of the ceaseless wars, in one of which he himself was certainly present. Chaucer was less a soldier than an artist, and his scenes of fierce combat, when they occur, have tempted him through their picturesqueness, not his ferocity. Indeed, Chaucer repeatedly expresses his dislike to painful images and dismal tales, and his experience of his one battle (of which we may trace hints in the early part of the *Knight's Tale*, when the 'pillours' of the dead are referred to) may have been too disagreeable for his pen. Chaucer's character was genial, kindly, warm with human passions, but not the fiercest; his love of beautiful woodland scenes where passes merry hunt or silent river, of beautiful women, with their 'clear hair' and 'assured manner,' of rich architecture and decoration, that he may have sauntered through with William of Wykeham, all point to a pacific temper and an artist's heart.]

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men could stand and hurl stones or other missiles. Peas, which formed the main nourishment of sailors, were thrown to prevent the enemy setting foot on the hatches.

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